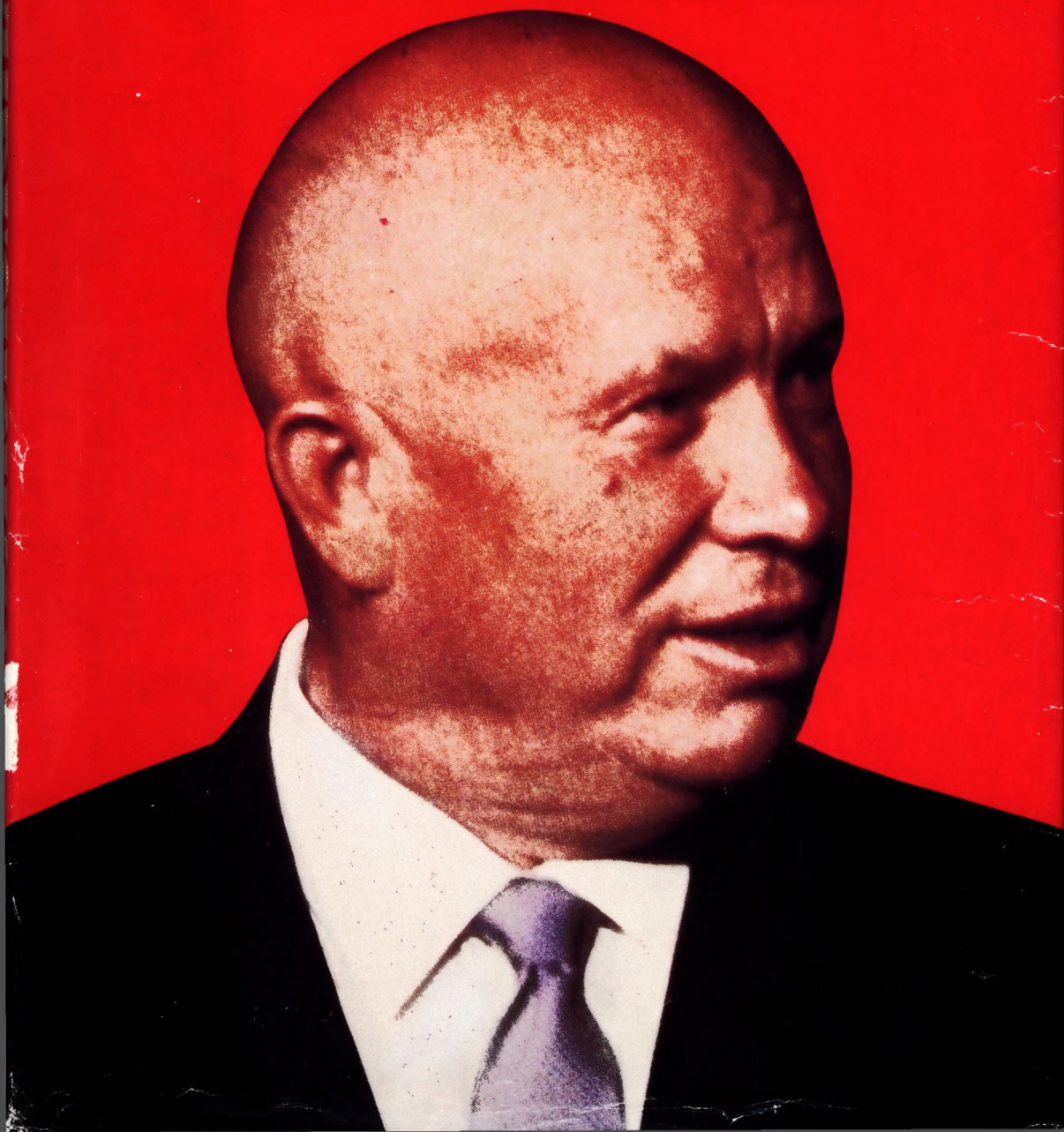


KHRUSHCHEV

A BIOGRAPHY BY

ROY MEDVEDEV

AUTHOR OF LET HISTORY JUDGE



KHRUSHCHEV

ROY MEDVEDEV

Written by the famed Russian dissident historian Roy Medvedev, **KHRUSHCHEV** is the first major and comprehensive biography of one of the twentieth century's most influential yet enigmatic figures. Though critical of Khrushchev, the book was written with the assistance of several members of his family, including his son Sergei, and it reveals much crucial new information about Khrushchev's private life and political battles.

Medvedev covers the whole of Khrushchev's public life from his entrance into the Communist Party amidst Stalin's purges to his fall from power in 1964 and his death in 1971. He offers a rare view of what was going on inside Russia as Khrushchev denounced Stalin, as he confronted Kennedy over the Cuban missile crisis, and as he struggled for power with other Communist leaders inside and outside the Soviet Union.

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In KHRUSHCHEV, Medvedev conveys both the warmth and the arrogance of this controversial leader. Like Medvedev's *Let History Judge*, this is a book that will force people in and out of Russia to reassess their understanding of that country's history.

Roy Medvedev is the author of *Let History Judge*, *A Question of Madness*, *On Stalin and Stalinism*, and other books. Although a dissident, Medvedev remains a committed Marxist and continues to live in the Soviet Union.

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Preface

In the years that have elapsed since Nikita Sergeyevich Khrushchev's enforced retirement much has been said and written about him outside the Soviet Union; hardly a word about him has been published in his own country. Yet he is remembered here, just as he is elsewhere – and that is natural, for he was undoubtedly one of the most remarkable and most ambivalent political figures of the twentieth century.

Khrushchev is a provocative subject for a biography not simply because for eleven years he led the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and was head of the country's Government, at first *de facto* and later *de jure*, nor because in his hands was concentrated the almost unlimited authority of one of the two greatest world powers and he was often obliged to take decisions that affected, directly or indirectly, the fate of mankind. His life and personality also call for scrutiny and assessment because he was an outstanding statesman and politician whose stormy career carved a deep trench in the history of the Soviet Union and in that of the entire Communist movement.

He met frequently nearly all the prominent political figures of his time – Tito, Eisenhower, Kennedy, Mao Tse-tung, de Gaulle, Castro, Churchill, Eden, Nehru, Ho Chi-minh, Sukarno, Nasser, Nkrumah, Adenauer, Togliatti. He was intimidated by none of them. When there was a conflict of interests or of views, he met the challenge unflinchingly – and if he did not always manage to emerge the victor in open political debate, at least he generally held his opponents to a draw.

In his own country he manipulated his political colleagues just as skilfully for a long time. He succeeded to the leadership after the death of Stalin, who had despised even his closest colleagues and, assuming apparently that he would live to a ripe old age, had not concerned himself with the question of a possible successor. The result was a bitter struggle for power when he died, from which Khrushchev emerged victorious, having revealed himself to be a match even for an opponent as formidable as Beria and quite capable of removing from

positions of power rivals who had appeared to be politically more astute than he was—Molotov, Malenkov, Kaganovich and Voroshilov.

Khrushchev was Stalin's antagonist rather than his proselyte; his years in power constituted a distinct epoch in the history of the Soviet Union, one that had a style and a flavour that were quite different from those of both the dark days of Stalin's tyranny and the epoch of 'stability' that followed Khrushchev's departure from the political scene. But he certainly did not regard his task as the annihilation of the political system that had been erected by his predecessor: on the contrary, he exploited its authoritarian structure to the full, in order both to consolidate his own power and to implement a number of political and economic reforms. Nevertheless, he did modify the system substantially and destroyed not only the Stalin cult but also the myth of the infallibility of the Party and its leaders. His tireless activity confirmed that it was possible to change Soviet society from the top, given support from below. And if many of his reforms were short-lived or unsuccessful, the cause is to be sought mainly in the characteristic haste and impatience of the reformer—in what is known, in official Soviet jargon, as his 'voluntarism' and 'subjectivism'.

Khrushchev was born into a worker's family. He himself worked for several years in the factories and mines of the Donbas, although his childhood had been spent among the peasantry of Kursk province, where no one escaped the harsh toil that marked the peasant way of life. For him political power was never an end in itself; he never severed his ties with the people and was always conscious of the needs of workers and peasants. When he found himself at the head of a huge bureaucratic apparatus—the first worker ever to attain such a position—he was influenced by it to some extent but remained hostile to it and never put his trust in it. He was no *apparatchik* or bureaucrat; indeed, he was always attempting to reconstruct and modify the system. He violated the 'confidentiality' of the bureaucracy, hitting out at the traditional status of its functionaries. (This crusade was a failure, though; ironically, during his years in power the tentacles of an omnipotent bureaucracy reached further and further.)

Khrushchev was typical of the early twentieth-century Russian peasant and worker: he was courageous and committed, yet cautious and even diffident at times; he was enormously energetic, hard-working and tenacious; he lacked education but made up for that with wit, cunning and general good nature that was offset by a certain tight-fistedness, determination to get his own way and general hostility towards officialdom. He needed to assess everything himself, to touch

everything with his own hands. He put little faith in documents and was not content to run the Party and the country from an office in the Kremlin – hence his visits to every part of the Soviet Union and his many journeys all over the world. He was not only his country's leader: he was her inspector-general.

He was no theoretician. He contributed nothing to the theoretical discourse initiated by Lenin or to its successor, that politico-theoretical hybrid that came to be known as Stalinism. Many of the important decisions that he took were founded on empirical observation rather than theoretical construct. They were motivated by a keen instinct for the appropriate course to take – though the instinct rarely extended to identifying precisely how certain ends were to be achieved. Nevertheless, he often advanced ideas that were bold and fresh, and these stimulated indirectly the development of Marxist theory. Under Khrushchev the social sciences in the Soviet Union took a decisive step forward.

Khrushchev was often called a public figure of the Lenin type – and indeed he had much in common with Lenin: candour, the resilience to withstand political setbacks, an oratorical style that fused polemic and popular appeal, the vigour and the courage to take risks, devotion to the Party. But he was also a disciple of Stalin and a product of the Stalin era, which had schooled him in political dexterity and had left him a legacy of ruthlessness, discretion and the perspicacity to ignore certain obvious truths. In spite of these influences, Khrushchev was a highly original man with a great deal of natural talent, an unusually strong will and great buoyancy. He was remarkably independent – as many of his decisions indicate; unfortunately, however, he was always impatient, keen to pursue courses of action that, by their very nature, could not produce results as quickly as he anticipated. He often resorted to improvisation – sometimes a useful political expedient but one that generally precipitated economic disaster. One of his main defects as a leader was that he had little understanding of people or of their motives. As a result, he was often influenced by the unscrupulous and the venal and, having dismissed one corrupt official, frequently replaced him with another who was even worse.

Khrushchev did not escape the corrosive effects of absolute power and adulation. In the last years of his leadership his manner was increasingly that of a bully, and he became less and less self-critical, compounding his mistakes by refusing to acknowledge his failures. His withdrawal from politics was forced on him; yet even in the last hours of supremacy, as he parried the attacks of his opponents, power

remained for him a means, not an end; he defended himself with words alone.

Khrushchev's record in power was chequered. He was certainly responsible for some notable errors of judgement. But he will be remembered for the achievements of those years – achievements that were largely inspired by him: the rehabilitation of millions of men and women who had suffered in Stalin's camps and prisons and in exile; the transformation of the system of collective farms as it had existed under Stalin; and the radical revision of the foreign policy of the Soviet Union. These and many other social and political reforms paved the way for further advances, which Khrushchev himself was unable to initiate. Few of them, alas, have been implemented by his successors – a sobering thought as we stand now on the threshold of a new era.

Moscow, June 1981

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PART ONE

From the Mines to Moscow
1909–1937

‘A Working Man’s Cambridge’

Even when he was head of the Soviet state, Khrushchev enjoyed reminiscing about his childhood and youth. Speaking in Bulgaria in 1962, for example, he said:

I started work at a very early age. Whenever I see shepherds tending their sheep now, my own childhood springs to mind. I remember looking after sheep too, though I was never a fully-fledged shepherd; I was something a little less exalted than that. The shepherd used to send me out, saying: ‘Right, Nikita, run and bring the sheep in’ – and that is just what I did. When I lived in the country I used to tend the calves too. . . . Later I worked in factories and in the mines, in pits that were dripping wet. I often used to leave the pit and walk the 3 kilometres home in sodden clothes. The capitalists didn’t provide baths or changing-rooms for us.¹

That same year, when he was addressing a meeting of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR in December, he said:

I spent my childhood and youth in the mines. If Gorky’s university was his life among the people, mine was those pits. They were a working man’s Cambridge, the university of the dispossessed people of Russia. My father acquired his education there, and so did I. . . .²

Three years earlier, during his visit to the United States in September 1959, Khrushchev had been taken to Hollywood, where Twentieth Century-Fox had organized a lavish reception in his honour. It was a glittering occasion, attended by all the leading film stars, musicians, directors and producers in the country. In the speech that he gave that day Spiros Skouras, then head of the studios, mentioned more than once that he had come from very humble origins, yet was now in charge of an enormous film company. When Khrushchev replied he took the cue and asked the assembled guests:

Would you like to know what I was once? I started work as soon as I could walk. Up to the age of 15 I looked after calves, then sheep and the landlord's cows. . . . Then I worked in a factory owned by Germans, in coal mines owned by Frenchmen and in chemical plants owned by Belgians – and now I am leader of the great Soviet state.³

His words provoked a particularly warm response in the United States, where success achieved through a combination of hard work, talent and luck has always been a popular theme; but Khrushchev's rise to power was no fiction invented by pedlars of dreams.

Nikita Sergeyevich Khrushchev was born on 17 April 1894, in the village of Kalinovka in Kursk province. His parents, Sergei Nikanorovich and Ksenia Ivanovna, were peasants, as was his paternal grandfather, Nikanor Sergeyevich. After the birth of his son and his daughter Irina, Sergei Khrushchev left home more and more frequently in winter to find work. The family remained in Kalinovka, where young Nikita tended cows and sheep during the summers, as most of the peasant children did, and spent the winters learning to read and write under the tutelage of his schoolteacher, Lidia Mikhailovna. His education ended when he left primary school.

In 1908, when Nikita was 14, his father decided to abandon the land altogether and to become a mineworker at the coal pits of the Donbas region in the Ukraine. The whole family moved south, to a small, single-storey house outside Yuzovka (renamed Stalino in 1924 and Donetsk in 1961), a typical workers' settlement of the time, where several factories, some coal mines and workshops of different kinds provided a living for the 40,000 inhabitants. The little town boasted one hospital, two primary schools – and thirty-three shops selling beer or vodka. Nikita busied himself tending cows and cleaning out the boilers at the pits for a few months, and when he was 15 he was taken on as an apprentice fitter at the Bosse factory, a German-owned enterprise. He worked in a machine shop in which equipment for the local mines was repaired.

The workers of Yuzovka remembered the abortive revolution of 1905 well, and stories about the events of the recent past stirred the imagination of the young people of the town, among whom one, a miner named Pantelei Makhinya, had become a particular friend of Nikita Khrushchev. It was through Makhinya that Nikita first became acquainted with literature and politics. Among other books, he borrowed from him a small volume of Marx's writings that included the 'Manifesto of the Communist Party', which exerted a powerful

influence over young Khrushchev and his friends. Fifty years later, in an address to the Third Congress of Soviet Writers in Moscow in May 1959, the head of the Soviet state was to recall his friend, who had been killed in the civil war, and to recite one of his poems:

When I read a book
I like it to kindle the true flame of feeling,
So that, amidst our busy lives,
It will burn and burn, a constant flare
To ignite the impulses, the forces of men's hearts,
So that we can fight against darkness till our death,
So that our lives do not pass in vain.
For it is my duty, brothers,
To leave behind at least one fragment of honest labour,
So that in the black, sepulchral shades
Conscience will not nag.⁴

In 1911 and 1912 the illegal Bolshevik organizations stepped up their activity. Influenced by the news of the massacre by Tsarist troops of miners at the Lena goldfield in Siberia and goaded by Khrushchev and others, the workers at the Bosse factory went on strike. On the orders of the local police chief, the strike leaders were dismissed. Khrushchev was unable to find another job in a factory, but he was taken on at the French-owned Rutchenkovo pits and worked as a fitter in No. 31 mine, which was fairly large for those days. In the mines the labour movement was quite well established and mainly Bolshevik in tendency. Two newspapers circulated among the miners – *Pravda*, the distribution of which was quite legal, and *Shakhtersky Listok* (*Miners' News*), a bulletin published by and for the workers of the Donbas.

Khrushchev was not called up at the outbreak of the First World War in 1914; most mineworkers were exempt. By now an experienced fitter, he was transferred to a machine shop that repaired equipment for several of the pits. In the first year of the war he married his first wife, Yefrosinya, who was soon to bear him a son, Leonid, and a daughter, Yulia.⁵ During the next three years the conditions of the mineworkers deteriorated, as the cost of living rose but wages remained static. The men turned to traders and moneylenders for credit and were ruthlessly exploited. Nearly half a century later, at one of his press conferences, Khrushchev recalled:

At that time some of the capitalists paid their workers no money but gave them vouchers instead – a kind of paper currency of their own.

There was a trader called Karakozov. When one worker asked another for a loan, he would say, 'Lend me some *karakoziki*.' A rouble's worth of these *karakoziki* often sold for 10 kopecks because you could only exchange them at Karakozov's shop. And all his goods were rotten, lousy. He robbed the working people.⁶

By the end of 1914 disturbances and strikes were spreading. In March 1915 a major strike broke out at Rutchenkovo, where Khrushchev was one of the ringleaders, and on this occasion the mine owners were forced to capitulate. The next year, however, when rebellion flared up in the Gorlovka-Shcherbinovka district nearby, the owners retaliated by calling in the troops, and at one meeting of workers the police killed four men. The miners called for a general strike and organized a demonstration at which workers marched under banners bearing anti-war slogans. Reprisal was swift: hundreds of mineworkers were sent to the front. But strikes and disturbances persisted in the Donbas, almost without a break, right down to the February Revolution of 1917.

Yuzovka learned of the overthrow of the Tsarist autocracy through telegrams intercepted by workers at the railway station. Instantly meetings and elections to soviets were organized. Khrushchev was elected to a soviet of workers' deputies at Rutchenkovo and, as one of its leading members, planned and supervised the arrest of local police officials and the formation of a workers' militia. He served on another committee as well — one of the many military-revolutionary committees that were being formed throughout the Donbas at the instigation of the increasingly active Bolshevik Party in the area, of which Khrushchev was not yet a member, though its cause had his whole-hearted support.

News of the armed uprising in Petrograd and the transfer of power to the Soviet Government did not take long to reach the Donbas. At Lugansk, Gorlovka, Makeyevka and Shcherbinovka, where the soviets were headed by Bolsheviks, power passed peacefully into their hands; in the town of Yuzovka, by contrast, the Mensheviks and the Socialist Revolutionaries who still formed the majority in the soviet refused to recognize the new Government. It was not until December 1917 that they were forced to hold an election and Yakov Zalmayev, the head of the Bolshevik Party organization in Yuzovka, succeeded to the chairmanship. Khrushchev, who had played an active part in these events, was elected chairman of the Union of Metal Workers in the mining industry.

The situation in the Donbas immediately after the Revolution was a complicated one. From the south the region was threatened by the Cossack army of General Kaledin. Units of volunteers had already occupied several settlements around the Don and were dealing harshly with the miners there. The Donbas was also under siege from the forces of the Central Rada, the joint organ of the bourgeois and petty bourgeois parties that had temporarily seized power in Kiev and had proclaimed a Ukrainian People's Republic. By October 1917 fighting squads of workers and Red Guard units had been formed in the Donbas, and these now expanded and combined. Khrushchev joined the First Regiment of the Red Guard of the Donetsk Basin, known to the workers simply as the Donetsk Proletarian regiment; together with a fellow worker called Danilov, he led the Rutenkovo mineworkers' battalion. It was at this stage that he formally joined the Bolshevik Party.

The defeat of Kaledin's forces gave the workers of the Donbas only a temporary respite: in the spring of 1918 the Ukraine was invaded by German troops, who had made a pact with the Central Rada. The unified army of the miners, the Fifth Army, was able to put up some resistance, but not enough to prevent the Germans from occupying the area. Khrushchev returned home from the battle against Kaledin, but he was a wanted man by now, and he had to go into hiding. He went underground, literally: he crawled along a mine shaft, emerged on the steppe and, dodging the German troops, escaped eastward.

He made his way to his native province of Kursk and worked for a short time on the revolutionary committee of a rural district there, but he was soon drafted into active service on behalf of the Party again and was placed at the disposal of the political department of one of the infantry divisions. In the spring of 1918 he was engaged almost continuously in political work in the Red Army; in the summer he fought at the Tsaritsyn (now Volgograd) front; in the autumn he was sent to join the political department of the recently formed Ninth Army. By the spring of 1919 he was serving as commissar with the 2nd Battalion of the 74th Regiment of the 9th Infantry Division. He marched over a thousand kilometres southwards to fight with the Ninth Army in the Kuban and was present both when the Army – now renamed the Red Army of the Kuban – broke through the White Army's front from the direction of Yekaterinodar (now Krasnodar) and entered Novorossiisk and when General Denikin's forces surrendered at Sochi on 2 May 1920. He was a brave fighter and an able commissar.

Later he was often to recall those years of fighting. On one occasion in 1959 he said:

I remember certain incidents. . . . I was in the Red Army when we forced the White Guards into the Black Sea. My unit was stationed in the Kuban region, and I was quartered in the house of an educated family. My landlady was a graduate of the St Petersburg institute for young ladies of gentle birth. As for me, I suppose I still smelled of coal when I was living in her house. There were several other educated people living there – a lawyer, an engineer, a teacher and a musician. We Red Army men mixed with them. . . . Those members of the old intelligentsia gradually discovered that Communists were honest people who sought no personal gain but were committed to the common good. We were still quite unpolished, uneducated workers then, but we wanted to acquire an education, to learn to govern our country, to build a new society – and we devoted all our energy to pursuing those aims.⁷

For Military Commissar Khrushchev the civil war ended in the Kuban. The Party ordered him to return to his home in the Donbas, now liberated but in ruins, and there he had to face the demanding task of bringing up two small children on his own, as his wife had died of typhus in the difficult year of 1919.

The Foothills of Power: the Donbas and the Capital

The civil war left the country in total ruin. The factories and trains came to a standstill. Workers starved. Homes and offices were without heating. The war had destroyed the Donbas, the Soviet Union's primary source of energy.

Alarmed by the state of the country, the Central Committee of the Russian Communist Party (Bolsheviks) dispatched over 150 Party executives to the Donbas to restore the region to productivity. A Ukrainian Labour Army was formed, for a time under the leadership of one J. V. Stalin. Its orders were uncompromising: the entire male population between the ages of 18 and 46 and all skilled miners up to the age of 50 were to be put to work in the pits. All technical specialists up to the age of 65 were mobilized. The pits were given the names of regiments; groups of pits constituted divisions.

In Yuzovka a newspaper entitled *Diktatura Truda* (*The Dictatorship of Labour*) began to circulate. Its pages contained both appeals and threats. In June 1920, for example, the workers read these words:

Our immediate task is to enforce the discipline of labour rigidly. This is a very complex undertaking, the fulfilment of which will bring us one step nearer to Communism. We must mobilize all non-working elements of society, without exception, under this slogan: 'In the republic of labour there is no room for parasites and idlers. They will either be shot or pulverized between the great millstones of labour.'

Tens of thousands of volunteers and mobilized civilians arrived in the Donbas from every province in the country and, with them, trainloads of food and clothing. From the Donbas freight trains carried the first few thousand tonnes of coal. The summer of 1920 saw the industrial areas of the region divided into smaller units for administrative

purposes. Each section had a chairman and two deputies, one of whom undertook political work, while the other supervised technical matters. Yuzovka district was divided into three of these sections – Novorossiisk, Rutchenkovo and Voznesensk, and Khrushchev was appointed political leader of Rutchenkovo section, which included sixteen pits.

In March 1921 Lenin introduced his New Economic Policy, which gave some encouragement to private enterprise in an attempt to restore the morale of workers and peasants and to stimulate the economy, particularly agriculture. The automatic appropriation by the state of surplus grain was replaced by a tax in kind; thenceforth any surplus could be consumed or sold by the farmers. The transition to the New Economic Policy eased the situation in the country generally, but not in the Donbas. The summer of 1921 brought drought to the Ukraine, and thousands of men left the mines to seek refuge from famine. The output of coal fell sharply; it was barely sufficient to fuel the mines' own stokeholds. Trains bringing food to the Donbas broke down for lack of coal.

Despite the enormous difficulties, the crisis was overcome by the end of the year. The output of coal gradually rose, and the mines were eventually working at full capacity again. At the beginning of 1922 the Donbas received 2 million poods of grain, half of which had been imported. Payment in kind was introduced in the pits – the more coal a miner cut, the more bread he received. The first coal-cutting machines were purchased from abroad. The Rutchenkovo sectional administration, which was regarded as one of the best in the Donbas, opened the first school for mining apprentices.

Khrushchev was always immensely energetic, prepared to undertake any assignment. He not only toured his section holding meetings and making speeches; he also turned his hand to cutting coal and helping to repair mining equipment. And that was not all. The Donbas suffered from an acute shortage of specialists in all fields. Khrushchev later recalled:

Before the civil war I worked as a fitter in a mine in the Donbas. When I returned home they made me deputy manager of the Rutchenkovo mine. We tried to restore the coke works, but we had no plans to help us: the Belgians who had owned the mine had left and taken the blueprints with them. So we sought out the old workers, asked their advice and then took the ovens to pieces so that we could find out what the production of coke by-products involved and how to get it going.

Then we had no engineers to service the machines. Many of the engineers who had stayed behind in the Donbas were opposed to us. And it was under these difficult conditions that we revived industry in the region.²

In Moscow a Mining Institute and a Mining Academy were established to train specialists for the mines, and a technical college opened in the Donbas at the end of 1921. On the whole its students were quite mature; most of them had at least ten years' work in the pits behind them, and more than half were Communist Party or Komsomol members. The college set up a Workers' Faculty, the function of which was to provide the students with a general education that would serve as a foundation for specialist study. The first students were selected with great care. Khrushchev was among them, and, in acknowledgement of his political experience, he was elected secretary of the college's Party cell and political leader of the institution.

Gradually, the college grew and acquired new premises. On the initiative of its rector and of Khrushchev himself, the students built a factory that was connected with the college. Now and then they would find machine tools among heaps of old equipment and machinery, and they would spend weeks renovating them.

By 1923 the Donbas, now revived, was producing half of its pre-war output of coal. Khrushchev's family life became more settled. He had met Nina Petrovna Kukharchuk, a teacher at the province's Party school and a lecturer at the Workers' Faculty, and she soon became his second wife. They were later to have three children – two daughters, Rada and Yelena, and a son, Sergei.³

At the end of 1924 Khrushchev was a member of the commission that awarded diplomas to the first thirteen mining engineers to graduate from the Donetsk technical college, nearly all of whom were appointed to important posts in the industry. Khrushchev himself received no diploma; his future lay elsewhere. Within months the country's administration had been reorganized, and new administrative units, called raions, were formed in the okrugs. Among others, a raion was created in the Donbas that included the villages of the Maryinsk area and the pits of the Petrovsk mine. Khrushchev was elected secretary of the Party's raikom.

Industrialization began in earnest. The pits received coal-cutting, earth-moving and loading machines, conveyors and electric locomotives. In one year the output of coal at the Petrovsk mine increased from 26 million to 36 million poods. There was no shortage of labour, as thousands of peasants flocked to the pits from the provinces round

about, but the housing and training of the young workers posed a problem for the raikom, and conditions were extremely primitive.

The next year, 1925, was a good one. The mines in the raion exceeded the provisions of the year's economic plan; the first collective farms were formed in the villages of the area; the harvest was plentiful. The New Economic Policy was proving successful, and the countryside was developing quite rapidly. One day a young peasant came up to Khrushchev and asked: 'Will there come a time when you'll just press a button and rain will fall?' Without a moment's pause Khrushchev replied: 'That time will soon be here.'

It was in December of that year that he had his first opportunity to visit Moscow, when he attended the Fourteenth Party Congress as a member of the Ukrainian delegation, though one without voting rights. On the day that the Congress opened he was one of the first people to enter the hall – but only after he had spent some time wandering about the streets of the city in search of the Kremlin. The Congress witnessed a bitter struggle between the majority in the Central Committee of the Communist Party and the Leningrad faction headed by G. Zinoviev, which was uneasy about the continuing implementation of the New Economic Policy and had prepared an attack on Stalin. As was to be expected, Khrushchev enthusiastically supported the 'general line' and, together with the other delegates from the Ukraine, proposed toasts to Stalin, whom he saw from a distance for the first time. The Party's leader made a very favourable impression on the young man: Khrushchev could not guess, of course, that Stalin's approachability and apparent guilelessness were merely a mask assumed to win the support of lower-ranking Party functionaries.

Two years later, in 1927, Khrushchev attended another Party Congress, but this time as a delegate with full rights. In the period between the Fourteenth and the Fifteenth Congresses he had fought actively against the 'Left', comprising Zinoviev, Kamenev and Trotsky, whose opposition to the New Economic Policy persisted. At the 1927 Congress, along with the overwhelming majority of the other delegates, he voted for the expulsion from the Party of the faction's leaders and dozens of others who supported them.

The successes achieved by the raikom of which Khrushchev was secretary attracted some attention in the Donbas. He was transferred from the Petrovsk-Maryinsk raion to a job at okrug level, and the scope of his work expanded considerably. He had every reason to be proud of his achievements in his new job too: the Party membership of the Donets area was among the highest in the Soviet Union; by the

beginning of 1927 the output of coal in the Donbas had exceeded pre-war levels; Houses of Culture (the equivalents of today's Palaces of Culture) had been constructed in many of the region's towns; the railway had been extended to service the centre of the okrug, which had also been provided with a piped water supply; a number of cinemas had opened, and the first radio station in the district had begun to transmit programmes. These were no small achievements for that period, and they testified to Khrushchev's remarkable competence as a Party executive – one of the best in the Ukraine. He did suffer from one disadvantage, however: his formal education had been extremely limited, and the demanding workload that any Party functionary had to shoulder in those days prevented him from pursuing his studies. He would probably have remained a middle-ranking executive had he not had the good fortune to benefit from two lucky 'lottery tickets', as he called them.

At the beginning of 1928 S. V. Kosior was elected General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Ukrainian Communist Party. He had formerly been one of the secretaries of the Central Committee of the All-Union Party. His first move was to reorganize the Party apparatus in the Ukraine, and he summoned the head of the organization department of the Central Committee, N. Demchenko, to issue the following instructions:

You have six people working in the organization department, all of them drawn from the intelligentsia. You should have one good working-class deputy. Send one of your men to the Donbas, and get them to give you six Party executives with working-class backgrounds. But bear in mind that the man in charge in the Donbas at present is Moiseyenko, and he's a wily *muzhik*. He'll want to keep the men we need for himself and will try to palm off some poor specimens on you. So interview each candidate carefully, and bring only the very best of them back here. I will choose the one we want myself.

A. V. Snegov was dispatched to the Donbas. He selected six men, one of whom was Khrushchev. They were all sent to Kharkov, then the capital of the Ukraine, where Kosior interviewed each candidate. He chose Khrushchev, who was appointed deputy to Demchenko.⁴

In those days no one worked in the same place for long. Demchenko was soon transferred to Kiev, where he assumed the duties of secretary of the Party's okruzhkom, and with him he took Khrushchev, who had been promoted to head of the organization department. But

Khrushchev did not stay there long either. In 1929 the Industrial Academy opened in Moscow – an institution whose remit was to train higher Party cadres for work on the country's economy. Where applications were concerned, priority was accorded to Party executives from working-class backgrounds, and Khrushchev was selected as one of the Academy's first students.

His time at the Academy consolidated his political position. First, there was the issue of the 'Right deviationists'. In 1928 he had supported the sentence passed on the engineers from Shakhty, in the Donets basin, who had been accused of 'wrecking' on behalf of the former mine owners, both Russian and foreign. Although the case had involved men of his own area, he had been too inexperienced to see that the affair had been rigged. In his first year at the Academy his political allegiance was unwavering: he was a prominent supporter of the struggle against the 'Right deviationists' who then dominated the Party organization at the Academy and selected their men as the Academy's delegates to the Party conference of Moscow's Bauman raion. In the wake of two attacks on these delegates that appeared in *Pravda*, the Academy 'recognized' its mistake and resolved to recall the delegates and to elect a new bureau for its Party cell. Khrushchev, who continued to uphold the Party's 'general line' with vigour, was appointed secretary of the newly constituted bureau – and this was perhaps the first occasion on which his name appeared in the central press.

Naturally, the bureau gave its warm support to collectivization in its Stalinist form, to the sentences passed in the cases of the members of the Industrial Party who were accused of working for France and to the struggle against the so-called 'bourgeois specialists', members of the old intelligentsia whose show trials were designed to intimidate critics of the regime. Yet Khrushchev was fortunate enough to be able to wage this war theoretically, so to speak: he was not required to carry out collectivization in person or to engage in the campaign against the kulaks, or wealthy peasants, that was so dear to Stalin, as were so many of his friends and colleagues. Nevertheless, he did have a hand in expelling from the Academy a group of students who were accused of belonging to the 'Right'.

Khrushchev's time at the Academy was productive in one other respect. Among the first batch of students was Nadezhda Alliluyeva, Stalin's wife, who was one of the Party organizers at the Academy. Few of the students were aware that the young woman, who travelled to the Academy by tram and whose name gave no clue to her identity, was the

wife of the country's leader. Khrushchev and she became very friendly, and the young man was convinced that it was she who drew Stalin's attention to him. In his memoirs he was later to write:

When I became secretary of the Moscow gorkom and obkom and met Stalin frequently at family dinners at his house . . . I realized that she must often have talked to Stalin about life at the Industrial Academy and about my role in the fight for the 'general line'. Subsequently, when we were talking Stalin would often remind me of this or that incident, and at first I didn't know what he was referring to – I had forgotten. . . . Nadezhda Sergeyevna must have told him. I think it was this that secured my position and, most important, defined Stalin's attitude towards me. I call this the lottery ticket that I drew – the lucky lottery ticket. And this was why I stayed alive when most of my contemporaries, my classmates at the Academy, the friends with whom I had worked in the Party organization, lost their lives because they were regarded as enemies of the people.⁵

Perhaps: yet by the time that Khrushchev became secretary of the Moscow gorkom and obkom, Nadezhda Alliluyeva was dead, so his memory was playing him false. It is conceivable that she had discussed events at the Academy with her husband, but Stalin took too little notice of his wife's views to pay much heed to her anecdotes. What was much more important to Khrushchev's career was the fact that he had caught the attention of L. M. Kaganovich, who had been General Secretary of the Party in the Ukraine and was now not only a member of the Politburo and a secretary of the Central Committee but also First Secretary of the Moscow gorkom and obkom. Kaganovich needed an energetic assistant in Moscow, and it was he who summoned Khrushchev from the Industrial Academy to carry out Party work in the capital.

Khrushchev's career developed swiftly. In 1931, on Kaganovich's recommendation, he was elected First Secretary of the Bauman raikom. A few months later he was moved to the raikom of another Moscow district, Krasnaya Presnya, where he replaced as First Secretary M. N. Ryutin, whom the Politburo had exiled to a remote part of the country because of his opposition to the Party's policy. Many of his colleagues shared his fate, and there can be little doubt that Khrushchev's task was to cleanse the Party organization in his raion of any vestiges of 'Ryutinism'.

The next year Khrushchev was elected Second Secretary of the Moscow gorkom, and in 1934, when he was just 39, he became a

member of the Central Committee. Soon after that he was promoted to First Secretary of the Moscow gorkom and Second Secretary of the city's obkom, which meant that he was Kaganovich's deputy in the capital – but not for long. Kaganovich was widely regarded as one of the Party's best organizers, and when it became apparent that the well-being of the country's economy depended on the radical reorganization of the railways, he was clearly the man for the job. On his recommendation, and with Stalin's approval, Khrushchev was elected First Secretary of the Moscow obkom. The appointment elicited the following comment from the editor of *Rabochaya Moskva* (*Workers' Moscow*):

Com. Khrushchev – a working man who has attended the school of struggle and of Party work, having started at the very bottom – is an outstanding representative of the post-October generation of Party workers, educated by Stalin. Under the guidance of that notable master of the Stalin method of working, Comrade Kaganovich, N. S. Khrushchev has grown step by step with our Party in recent years and is a worthy leader of our glorious Moscow Party organization.⁶

Khrushchev himself wrote of his reaction to his promotion:

[When] Kaganovich was appointed People's Commissar of Transport . . . I was promoted to take his place. . . . At the very next plenum of the Central Committee I was elected a candidate member of the Politburo. I was pleased and flattered, but I was also terrified by the onerous responsibility that went with the job. I was now a fully-fledged professional Party worker – but I kept with me the tools of my trade: calipers, markers, a try-square, a ruler and a litre measure. I was reluctant to sever my ties with my old profession. The way I looked at it, a Party job was elective, and if I weren't re-elected, I might one day have to return to my original career as a fitter.⁷

The responsibilities of high office may indeed have seemed daunting, but in fact Khrushchev's activities as First Secretary of the Moscow obkom were far more circumscribed than those of the secretaries of other obkoms. Issues that were decided unilaterally elsewhere had to be submitted in Moscow to the scrutiny of authorities at all-Union level and sometimes of Stalin himself. Even plans for local construction and the provision of public utilities in the capital were authorized only in part by the Moscow obkom or soviet. On one occasion, for example, after a May Day demonstration attended by a large number

of foreign visitors, Stalin summoned Khrushchev and ordered him to erect forty public urinals in the capital with all possible speed, since the absence of such facilities had caused the demonstrators some considerable inconvenience. There were ways in which Khrushchev could make his mark, however. He was a tireless worker: he visited factories and farms in the capital and in the oblast; he organized conferences for the chairmen of collective farms, teachers, scientists and beet growers; he took an active part in implementing the plan for the reconstruction of Moscow.

At that time the city was a gigantic building site. A German writer who visited Moscow in the summer of 1934 wrote:

Moscow as a whole appeared to be dreadfully incomplete and very noisy. The streets had been excavated; there were long, muddy trenches floored with dirty planks; heaps of soil lay everywhere. The whole city was in a mess, and heavily loaded lorries were busy shifting the accumulated debris. Everywhere one saw long fences around the Metro stations that were under construction; everywhere scaffolding shrouded half-built skyscrapers and houses. In every quarter of the city the earth shook with the ringing of hammers, the banging, bumping and screeching of single-bucket excavators, concrete mixers and machines that turned out mortar. Thousands of men worked day and night with almost fanatical diligence. Packed trams rumbled along the streets. There were only a few cars to be seen, of all makes and vintages. The streets were full of one-horse carriages, their boxes occupied by surly drivers. In the centre of the city there were some large, very up-to-date trolley buses.*

Moscow was in the throes of becoming the largest centre of industrial production in the country, and the responsibilities of both Khrushchev and N. A. Bulganin, the chairman of the Moscow soviet, grew heavier as they supervised the construction of factories, housing, schools, Pioneer Houses and Palaces for children between 9 and 14, parks, Houses of Culture and cinemas. The Moscow-Volga Canal also called for a great deal of supervision, as although it was an open secret that prison labour was being used on a massive scale, the capital was committed to supplying quantities of materials and machinery.

But it was the Metro that principally engaged Khrushchev's attention. It was a vast project for those days – particularly as the Central Committee had decided that it was to be the finest Metro in the world. The first experimental sections had been built in 1931; the next year plans for an entire underground railway system had been drawn up by a team of Soviet, German, French and British specialists, and a group

of Soviet engineers had visited several West European countries to learn from their experience. Construction work began and proceeded at an unprecedented pace: in one year alone (1934) 85 per cent of the basic work on the first line was completed – and under very testing conditions. Over 70,000 men were employed. Almost every day Khrushchev donned a pair of overalls and visited the pits where work was in progress, checking on the rate of construction personally and helping to resolve problems as they arose. The ceremonial inauguration of the first line of the Moscow Metro was celebrated all over the country. For his contribution to its success Khrushchev was awarded the Order of Lenin, his first decoration.

As First Secretary of the Moscow obkom, Khrushchev was in a position to make numerous useful contacts. Lively, genial, energetic and generally straightforward, he appeared to have no enemies at the top of the Party hierarchy. He was eager to learn, shrewd and cautious – but also courageous and persistent. If his education was limited, so was that of Stalin, Kaganovich and many of the other Bolshevik leaders – in this respect they were strikingly different from the first generation of the Party's leaders, who had spent years engaged in theoretical debates – but his native wit and intuition preserved him from the snares of the labyrinthine corridors of power. His friendship with Bulganin was later to serve him well, though it was to end abruptly in 1957. He established good relations with several high-ranking Party officials in the city's oblast – N. A. Filatov, D. A. Karpov, S. Z. Korytny and others. And Stalin took him under his wing.

Khrushchev and Bulganin were often invited to Stalin's home for dinner. The Party's leader was an accomplished actor: although he was curt and harsh by nature, he could be kindly and courteous when he wanted to enlist the sympathies of someone who could be useful to him. Khrushchev later recalled:

During the period . . . in which I worked in the Party's gorkom I often met Stalin, listened to him and even received instructions from him. . . . I was literally spellbound by Stalin, by his attentiveness, his concern. . . . Everything that I saw and heard when I was with him bewitched me; I was absolutely overwhelmed by his charm.⁹

To introduce a cynical note: it is not impossible that Stalin's liking for Khrushchev was founded not only on the young man's energy and unconditional loyalty but also on the fact that he was shorter than Stalin: the leader did not like tall men.

Even when the political atmosphere changed, Khrushchev staunchly defended Stalin's line:

Sometimes a man sits there with enemies swarming around him, practically crawling up his legs, and he doesn't notice them – he thinks, complacently, that in *his* organization there are no wreckers, no alien elements. His confidence is the product of stupidity, of political myopia, of the negligence to which idiots are prone; it certainly does not spring from the absence of enemies.¹⁰

These words of Khrushchev's were reported in the press in March 1937, when Stalin's reign of terror had begun to grip the country. The first purges had occurred in 1935. Organs of the NKVD had launched a campaign to rid Leningrad and Moscow of 'undesirable elements', and thousands of noble and kulak families, factory owners and others regarded as 'undesirable' had been exiled to the provinces – a move that Khrushchev had regarded as quite proper. The arrests that took place the following year had dispossessed mainly those who opposed Stalin's policy, most of whom held posts in the second rank of the Party and state apparatus. After the plenum of the Central Committee in February–March 1937, however, the wave of repression gathered force, sweeping before it tens of thousands of people who had never subscribed to any kind of formal opposition. Soon the Party organization of Moscow oblast itself was affected. Filatov, the chairman of the city's oblispolkom, and S. Z. Korytny, secretary of the Moscow gorkom, were arrested, as were dozens of other responsible Party executives and administrators of enterprises in the capital, including many of those who had organized the construction of the Metro. Raikom secretaries disappeared without trace. Speaking at the Fifth Party Conference of Moscow oblast in June 1937, Khrushchev was moved to say: 'These despicable traitors infested the Party apparatus, and some of them were actually members or candidates for membership of the Moscow Party Committee.'¹¹

Clearly, Khrushchev was not one of the prime movers in the tyranny of 1937, unlike Kaganovich, Molotov or Andreyev, who did not merely give their tacit consent to the arrest of innocent people but went so far as to compile lists of executives in their departments who were 'enemies of the people' and travelled around the country to assist the NKVD with its task. On the other hand, there is no evidence to suggest that he ever opposed Stalin's measures or made any effort to protect officials of the Moscow Party and soviet from reprisals. He trusted

Stalin and the organs of the NKVD. He read 'testimonies' extracted from victims of the terror without questioning their validity; he gave speeches in which he called for vigilance and the exposure of 'enemies'; he complied with the NKVD's requests for his permission to proceed with arrests, even though on many occasions he was undoubtedly far from convinced that the accused were guilty of the crimes with which they were charged. Perhaps he consoled himself with the thought that the NKVD would investigate every case thoroughly and would release the innocent – that Stalin and those who were responsible for implementing his tyrannical measures were better informed than he. In his memoirs he says nothing at all about this, although he does acknowledge that he acquiesced in the suppression of certain prominent Party workers on Stalin's insistence:

When an investigation was concluded and Stalin considered it necessary for others beside himself to put their signatures to the report, he would sign it then and there, at the meeting, and after that it would be passed around the rest of us, and we would sign without reading it. . . . We signed it as proof of crime, so to speak, on the basis of the information that Stalin gave us. And so it was a kind of collective verdict.¹²

This was only one of the ways in which Khrushchev abdicated moral responsibility. One of the tasks that he was obliged to undertake was to visit the prisons where those whose activities were under investigation were held. He relates one revealing incident:

[Treivas] was an intelligent, capable, decent man. I got to know him through the Moscow Party organization when [he] and I worked together for six months in the Bauman district. . . . He came to a tragic end. When Stalin proposed that regional committee secretaries should go round and inspect Chekist prisons in their areas, I found Treivas in jail during [one of] my rounds. He didn't escape the mincer when the butchery began in 1937.¹³

Treivas had been a respected colleague; yet Khrushchev did not intervene in his case, and Treivas perished. Admittedly, Khrushchev's hands were tied by the presence of the head of the NKVD administration in Moscow oblast, S. Redens, who was Stalin's brother-in-law; he accompanied Khrushchev on his visits to the prisons. But there can be little doubt that fear and circumspection dominated Khrushchev's actions as he watched the heads of people more prominent and more powerful than he fall to Stalin's axe. Even with

Nadezhda Konstantinovna Krupskaya he was obliged to be very formal, and she with him:

I had always revered Lenin as our great leader and therefore had the utmost respect for Nadezhda Konstantinovna. She had been Vladimir Ilyich's inseparable companion. It was a bitter time for me . . . when everyone started coming out against her. I remember her as a broken old woman. People avoided her like the plague. On Stalin's instructions, she was kept under close surveillance because she had strayed from the Party line. As I analyse now what happened during that period, I think Nadezhda Konstantinovna was correct in the stand she took . . . [but] she knew that I toed the 'general line' of the Party and that I was a product of Stalin's generation. She treated me accordingly.¹⁴

In the second half of 1937 the reprisals became particularly savage. Show trials were held in almost all of the raions of the Moscow oblast, and the sentence was nearly always the same – death by shooting. The campaign of terror subsided somewhat only towards the end of the year, when candidates for the Supreme Soviet began to be nominated. Khrushchev's name was put forward in several constituencies, but he himself chose to stand in Krasnaya Presnya. His election, like that of all the other candidates, was a foregone conclusion.

The first session of the Supreme Soviet took place between 12 and 16 January 1938. Khrushchev was elected to the Presidium and subsequently, at a plenum of the Central Committee of the Party that was held concurrently, he was nominated to replace P. Postyshev as a candidate for membership of the Politburo. He had become one of the ten most influential figures in the Communist Party and the Soviet state.

PART TWO

The Ukraine
1938–1949

The Ukraine under New Leadership

Altogether more than 150,000 Party members were arrested in the Ukraine in 1937. In the wake of the NKVD's assumption of supreme power in the Republic, wave after wave of devastating terror rolled over its people. One after another, Party functionaries disappeared into prison cells, either in the Ukraine or in Moscow – secretaries of obkoms and raions, People's Commissars, managers of large enterprises, chairmen of city and oblast soviets, leading workers on collective and state farms. Mass arrests took place all over the Republic. During the course of the year the entire leadership of the Party evaporated: Postyshev, the man whose place Khrushchev had taken as candidate for membership of the Politburo, was dismissed for 'insufficient vigilance'; S. A. Kudryavtsev was arrested; P. P. Lyubchenko committed suicide; N. F. Gikalo, V. P. Zatonsky and M. M. Khatayevich were arrested and shot; the secretary of the Central Committee of the Ukrainian Communist Party and prominent historian, N. N. Popov, was arrested and died in prison. By December the only Ukrainian leaders who were still at liberty were S. V. Kosior and G. I. Petrovsky, but their fate was soon to be sealed. That month, when Kosior was returning to Kiev after the first session of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR, he was suddenly informed that he was required in Moscow, as he had been appointed to the distinguished post of deputy chairman of the Council of People's Commissars. It was a ruse: Stalin was merely preparing the downfall of a man who had displeased him. Now only Petrovsky remained – and after the ceremonial celebration of his sixtieth birthday he too was removed from office and ordered to leave the Ukraine.

Stalin had decided to create a completely new leadership for the Republic. On 29 January 1938 the press carried the announcement that a plenary meeting of the Central Committee of the Ukrainian Communist Party had elected N. S. Khrushchev its acting First Secretary. Until June the prefix 'acting' was attached to the titles of

all the members of the Ukrainian Politburo; in that month a new Central Committee and Politburo were elected by the delegates to the Fourteenth Congress of the Ukrainian Party. Khrushchev's appointment was confirmed, and he was also elected First Secretary of the Party's Kiev obkom. At the end of July the first session of the newly constituted Supreme Soviet of the Ukrainian SSR took place in the city.

It would be wholly inaccurate to claim that Khrushchev played no part in the campaign of terror that swept through the Ukraine, but by the time that he returned to the Republic its force had abated somewhat. There were still arrests, of course, and they took place with his approval, but many of the obkom secretaries and People's Commissars who were removed from their posts at his instigation were demoted rather than arrested. In his speeches and reports Khrushchev made no mention of those who had been destroyed; only occasionally did he refer obliquely to the 'traitors and bourgeois nationalists' who had disappeared. In the speech that he gave at the Eighteenth Party Congress in Moscow, for example, he interrupted his account of the progress that had been made in reconstructing the culture and economy of the Ukraine to comment on the people's hatred for

these despicable spies, these Lyubchenkos, Khvylyas, Zatonskys and other vermin. This scum, this refuse of humanity is cursed by the working people of Soviet Ukraine. With the help of these enemies of the Ukrainian people the Fascists sought to enslave Soviet Ukraine. That did not happen – nor will it ever happen. The successful, triumphant crushing of the Fascist agents – all those contemptible Trotskyites, Bukharinites and bourgeois nationalists – we owe to the personal efforts of our leader above all, to our great Stalin.¹

Generally, however, the style of the new leadership was muted. Photographs of those at the apex of the Party hierarchy rarely appeared in the newspapers, whose pages were filled instead with pictures of workers engaged in industrial production, teaching and sport.

During the first half of 1939 Khrushchev devoted his attention principally to the development of industry and agriculture in the Republic. He visited nearly all the large cities in the Ukraine and organized several conferences at which agricultural issues were raised and discussed. The terror of the past two years was succeeded by a flurry of awards; new orders and medals were introduced, and tens of thousands of people were decorated for their achievements. Khrushchev himself received his second decoration, that of the Red Banner of Labour.

He spent the second half of August 1939 in Moscow, overseeing work at the Ukrainian pavilion at the All-Union Agricultural Exhibition. The atmosphere was uneasy: although he took no part in the negotiations with Ribbentrop that were preoccupying Stalin, he naturally knew about the secret articles concerning Poland that were contained in the treaty that was concluded. Immediately after the treaty had been ratified, he returned to the Ukraine where, as a member of the Military Council of the Kiev Special Military District, he was involved in extensive preparations for military action. Several dozen divisions were moved up to the Polish–Soviet border. On 17 September these troops crossed the border and occupied the territory of Western Ukraine and Western Byelorussia, which had hitherto formed part of Poland. The victory was an easy one. Having been defeated by the Germans and by then in retreat, the Polish forces surrendered almost without resistance. By 20 September units of the Red Army had entered Grodno in Western Byelorussia and Lvov in Western Ukraine. Throughout the campaign Khrushchev was on active service with the army of the Ukrainian Front, which had just been formed. At the end of October, when a People's Assembly of Western Ukraine was elected and adopted a resolution in favour of the region's absorption into the Ukrainian SSR, he took his place beside S. Timoshenko, the commander of the Ukrainian Front, in the box reserved for honoured guests.

It was a decision that thousands were later to regret: Western Ukraine was soon subjected to a harsh series of measures calculated to promote socialism and to rid the region of 'aliens'. In 1939 the survivors of the Polish army units that had retreated eastwards were interned there. In the rural areas Ukrainians predominated, but in the towns – Lvov, Borislav, Drohobych, Kovel – the population was largely Polish and Jewish. There were also large numbers of Polish refugees, many of whom had decided to return to the territory occupied by the Germans once military operations ceased. The Polish intelligentsia was in a state of shock, stunned by the speed with which Poland's independence had been wrested from her. There were very few Communists in the region: the Communist Parties of Poland, Western Ukraine and Western Byelorussia had been dissolved by the Comintern in 1937 – an action prompted by the spread of slanderous allegations – and their leaders arrested and killed. Party organizations had to be created from scratch. Furthermore, in Western Ukraine social reforms were carried out somewhat hastily: the region's banks, commercial enterprises and industry were nationalized, and

producers' co-operatives were formed. In the countryside kulak farms were seized and collective farms created in their place. Landlords' estates were sequestered.

Although these reforms encountered little opposition because the capitalists in Western Ukraine were demoralized and recognized that resistance would have been hopeless, the decision was taken to deport certain 'socially alien' groups of Poles, Jews and Ukrainians to the eastern parts of the Soviet Union. Most were exiled to towns in Siberia. And this was only the beginning of the process: after the war the fragmentation of communities was to become more radical in Western Ukraine, Western Byelorussia and the Baltic countries.

Elsewhere in the Ukraine there was comparative calm. It was a period of consolidation after the upheaval and despair of the 1930s – collectivization, the terrible famine of 1932–3, the bloody campaign against the 'bourgeois nationalists' and the 'wreckers', the terror of 1937–8. There were goods in the shops; cheap meat, milk and flour could be bought in the markets supplied by the collective farms. New factories were coming into production one after another, and the output of coal from the Donbas mines had increased threefold in ten years.

The Ukraine was regarded as the granary of the Soviet Union. Khrushchev found that he was spending much more time on agriculture than he had during his years in office in Moscow, and he travelled extensively all over the Republic, exhorting farmers to aim for higher yields. In this he was encouraged by his acquaintance with the geneticist Lysenko, who was a protégé of Stalin.

The composition of the Party's leadership in the Ukraine remained almost unchanged, except that I. A. Serov was appointed People's Commissar of Internal Affairs. He and Khrushchev had long been friends and colleagues. Khrushchev also struck up a lasting friendship with G. K. Zhukov, who replaced Timoshenko as commander of Kiev Special Military District when the latter was appointed People's Commissar of Defence of the USSR.

At the end of June 1940, under pressure from the Soviet Union with which Germany had to comply, Rumania was compelled 'peacefully' to surrender to the USSR all Bessarabia and northern Bukovina, which was inhabited mostly by Ukrainians. The Moldavian Autonomous SSR, which had been part of the Ukraine until then, united with most of Bessarabia to become a new Union Republic, the Moldavian SSR. The rest of Bessarabia and Bukovina were absorbed into the Ukraine. Almost the entire Ukrainian people now lived within the borders of a single republic.

They were oblivious to the misery that was threatening them. Stalin's orders were that the people were to be convinced that the war that had engulfed the rest of Europe would pass them by. A speech made by M. I. Kalinin to mark the twenty-third anniversary of the October Revolution was typical: 'Of all the major states, the Soviet Union is the only one that is not involved in the war and is observing strict neutrality. . . . When the whole world is in the grip of such a war it is great good fortune to be out of it.'² Confidence seemed to be justified. The prospects for the 1941 harvest were very favourable; industry was working well; the output of coal was increasing and, since the acquisition of Western Ukraine, so was that of oil. Khrushchev was on the crest of a wave: several collective farms now bore his name, and on the occasion of the twentieth anniversary of the Donets Industrial Institute, which was awarded the Order of the Red Banner of Labour, his name was appended to its title.

Nevertheless, he regarded with caution Stalin's assurances that Germany would never involve the Soviet Union in war, and he was greatly disturbed by reports that reached him from the Soviet-German border, as was Colonel-General M. P. Kirponos, who had assumed command of Kiev Special Military District since Zhukov's recent appointment as Chief of the General Staff of the Red Army. Khrushchev made frequent trips to the border zone to check on the progress of defensive works. He was alarmed by what he found. Work was proceeding very slowly; the strength of most of the units was still at peacetime levels; and there was a shortage of ammunition. He was outraged when he discovered one day that some of the tank units on the border had no ammunition at all and could not even carry out firing practice. He did what he could to make good certain deficiencies, but the appeals that he and Kirponos addressed to Stalin to speed up the construction of fortifications, to bring the units in the border zone up to full strength and to supply them with arms and ammunition were ignored.³

In mid-June 1941 he had to travel to Moscow, but the news was so alarming by the 20th that he sought Stalin's permission to return to Kiev. He told Stalin that he was afraid that war would break out before he reached home. His concern was well founded.

A large stadium had just been constructed in Kiev and named after him. On 20 and 21 June workmen were labouring day and night to complete the finishing touches in time for the opening ceremony that had been scheduled for Sunday 22 June. Kiev University had just opened its doors to a fresh intake of prospective students. The

ceremony at the stadium never took place, nor were entrance examinations held at the University. During the night of 21–22 June a sergeant-major of the 74th Division of the German Army crossed over to the Soviet lines. He reported that the Germans were going to attack at dawn. Kirponos informed Khrushchev and Zhukov at once, and within half an hour the news reached Stalin. Stalin took little notice of it and went off to his dacha to rest: but neither Zhukov in Moscow nor Khrushchev in Kiev slept that night. Their worst expectations were soon to be fulfilled.

Early in the morning of 22 June German troops crossed the border and attacked the frontier guards and Red Army units stationed there. Dozens of cities were bombed, including some in the Ukraine. The war had begun.

The Patriotic War

As a member of the Military Council of Kiev Special Military District, Khrushchev was commissar for the district, or the district commander's deputy in charge of political affairs. All the political departments of the military units in a district were subordinate to a member of the Military Council; hence no important decisions were taken at the headquarters of the military districts or, later, of army groups without his knowledge and participation. Furthermore, his membership of the all-Union Politburo and his position as First Secretary of the Central Committee of the Ukrainian Communist Party conferred on him considerable supplementary powers, which enabled him to keep a check on the smooth running of industry and transport in the Republic, the formation of the home guard, the mobilization of the population for the construction of fortifications and so on. Naturally, from the first hour of the war onwards, Khrushchev's attention was focused on military problems and on the tasks associated with the diversion of the Republic's resources towards the war effort.

At the outset things went badly for the Soviet Union. Although on the Southern Front, which was under the command of I. V. Tyulenev, the German and Romanian forces were prevented from crossing the river Pruth into Bessarabia until 16 July, they then broke through to Kishinev, the capital of Moldavia, and forced the Soviet units back to the further bank of the Dniester, where the organization of a fresh line of defence was planned. On the South-Western Front, where Kirponos was in command, the Germans quickly fractured the resistance of the frontier guards and that of the 5th, 6th and 26th armies that advanced to meet them. One after the other the towns of Western Ukraine fell to the enemy. The Soviet troops were forced back to the old state frontier – but the areas that had formerly been fortified had been stripped of armaments, and the mechanized German forces were able to advance far to the east. On 30 June enemy units captured Lvov, and on 7 July one corps entered Berdichev, having covered more than 200

kilometres in a week, while another tank corps took Zhitomir, about 120 kilometres west of Kiev. Although the main forces of the German Army were still locked in combat in the old fortified areas, by 11 July Kleist's tank group had penetrated the forward perimeter of the fortified area around Kiev: the intention was to capture the capital of the Ukraine *en passant*, so to speak, and then to swing round into the rear of the Southern Front and the southern section of the South-Western Front, thus surrounding the Soviet armies that were fighting there. The situation was extremely critical; many of the Soviet Union's military leaders were in despair. Khrushchev subsequently recalled:

... things were not going well for us, and the Soviet troops were in a difficult position. ... On the fifth or sixth day of the war the commander of the Front and I sent General Vashugin, one of the members of the Military Council, to instruct a tank corps in how its resources could best be used. When he returned Vashugin called on me. He was in a very strange and confused state. 'Everything is lost. Everything is just as it was in France. This is the end of everything. I am going to shoot myself,' he declared. I tried to restrain him: 'You're crazy – pull yourself together!' But before I had time to do anything, he drew his pistol and shot himself, right there in front of me.¹

Khrushchev and Kirponos were in charge of the defence of Kiev. All over the Ukraine the manufacture of arms and ammunition was under way – primarily the simplest type of anti-tank grenades and bottles filled with inflammable substances. The fortified region around Kiev had been allowed to fall into disrepair, but it was speedily put on a war footing again, and its pillboxes were equipped with armaments. The city's population got down to work and surrounded the periphery of the city with a deep anti-tank ditch. A home guard was formed. These measures were enough to prevent the German troops from capturing Kiev as easily as had been planned: during the second half of July and throughout August a great battle was fought outside the city, which pinned down substantial numbers of enemy forces. However, to the north and south German units, pressing the Red Army hard, advanced further to the east. A large Kiev salient was formed – a risky venture, as the Germans still had the initiative. If part of the German force had been moved from the centre to the south, a vast section of the Red Army would have been cut off; the consequence would have been not simply the loss of Kiev but a major defeat for the entire southern sector. It was not too late for the Red Army units to withdraw from Kiev and organize defences on the roads leading to Kharkov and the Donbas –

an expedient favoured by Kirponos and by Khrushchev and Budyonny, who were commanding the south-western sector – but Stalin forbade the troops to abandon Kiev.

Stalin's condition was extremely unstable during the first months of the war. To begin with he despaired and occasionally lost control over the country and the army. One summer day, while savage battles were raging in the Ukraine, he summoned Khrushchev to Moscow.

I saw Stalin [Khrushchev recalls] as I entered the command post, which was then located in the Metro station in Kirov Street (as Myasnikov Street was called at that time). He was completely demoralized. He was sitting on a couch, looking quite exhausted; when I approached, he returned my greeting perfunctorily, shook my hand and asked how things were going. I told him that things were in a bad way – we were in retreat. He retorted grumpily: 'Well, they used to talk of Russian gumption. Where is it now, that Russian gumption?' I felt utterly exasperated. How could Stalin . . . reproach the Russian people . . . when it was he, Stalin, who was to blame for the defeat that our troops had suffered because he had destroyed our cadres and had failed to exploit all the material resources that had been created by the labour and sweat of the Soviet people . . . ?²

By the autumn, however, Stalin had recovered his equilibrium. The battles outside Kiev and Smolensk had held up the general advance of the German Army; German troops had come to a halt outside Leningrad; in the south German and Romanian forces had been checked by the stubborn defence of Odessa. Nevertheless, he had little grasp of strategy and often issued contradictory orders, failed to appreciate the need for flexibility and placed little faith in his military leaders. Zhukov describes what happened when he attempted to convince Stalin of the wisdom of abandoning Kiev:

. . . I went on: 'The south-western army group should be withdrawn behind the Dnieper. We must concentrate our reserves, no fewer than five reinforced divisions, at the junction of the Central and South-Western Fronts.'

'But what about Kiev?' asked Stalin.

I realized what the words 'Abandon Kiev' would mean to all Soviet people and to Stalin. But I could not give in to sentiment and, as a military man, I was obliged to put forward the only possible solution in the circumstances. . . .

'We must surrender Kiev,' I replied. 'We must organize a counter-offensive in the western sector in order to eliminate the Yelnya bulge. The enemy could use that bridgehead to strike at Moscow.'

Stalin rounded on me. 'What counter-offensive are you talking about? How can you even think of surrendering Kiev to the enemy?'

I could not restrain myself and answered: 'If you think that your Chief of the General Staff is only capable of talking nonsense, then there's nothing for him to do here. I request permission to be released from my duties . . . and to be sent to the front. . . .'

'Don't get so excited,' said Stalin. 'On the other hand, if you're determined to take that attitude, well, we can get on without you.'

Next day Zhukov was dismissed from his post and dispatched to the Yelnya front. The troops under his command succeeded in inflicting a partial defeat on the Germans, but the south-western army group bore the brunt of Stalin's obduracy and military incompetence. On Khrushchev's initiative, the Military Council of the south-western sector took an independent decision to abandon Kiev. The news was conveyed to the city, but Kirponos hesitated because his orders, issued by Stalin, were to defend Kiev at all costs. As a result, the German forces enclosed the Soviet troops guarding the city, who capitulated on 21 September. Only a few units managed to break through the cordon; most of the troops and their commanders were either killed or taken prisoner. Almost the entire staff of the headquarters of the South-Western Front lost their lives.

Khrushchev was outside the cordon, as was Budyonny, but after the fall of Kiev the commander did not have enough battle-ready units at his disposal to plug the gap that had opened up in the Soviet lines. The German armies, meeting no resistance, rolled on eastwards, eventually occupying the whole of left-bank Ukraine. Not everything went their way, though: on one occasion Khrushchev's remarkable courage threw their plans into disarray.

He had established his headquarters in a detached house in the centre of Kharkov, but the plan was to surrender the town without a fight and to withdraw eastwards towards Voronezh and Kursk. The munitions expert I. T. Starinov had just designed a powerful mine that could be detonated by a long-distance radio signal, and a large quantity of these explosives was hidden beneath the house, where Khrushchev continued to live and work. He left the house only two or three hours before the first German units entered the town. Although the Germans had their spies in Kharkov, nothing suspicious had been noted; as had been anticipated, after the usual inspection the house was selected as one of the headquarters of the German Army. A few weeks later a radio signal transmitted from somewhere near Kursk

detonated the mines beneath the house, which exploded spectacularly, killing a large number of generals and other German officers.

During the critical days of the summer and autumn of 1941 Khrushchev hardly ever spoke in public. It was not a time for speeches: it would have been hard to explain to the beleaguered Ukrainians why such serious reverses had been suffered at the front. He did address an appeal to the people of the Ukraine on 8 July, however, when he called on them to fight the enemy ruthlessly, and a few days later he and Budyonny urged them to wage guerrilla war against the enemy forces. Six months later another appeal was issued. Referring to the victories of the Red Army before Moscow and on other fronts, Khrushchev and the other leaders of the Republic exhorted the Ukrainian people to unleash guerrilla warfare throughout the Ukraine, to flout German orders and to take every possible measure to prevent the enemy from obtaining grain or meat. The appeal concluded: 'We are straining every nerve to liberate you.'⁴

The Red Army's offensive in February and March 1942 brought insignificant gains, but with the arrival of the warm weather preparations for offensive action began again. Kharkov was to have been the object of one of the largest operations, and Khrushchev was among those charged with carrying it out. However, GHQ was unable to place enough troops at the disposal of the commander of the South-Western Front, and although the Soviet army broke through the enemy's defences and advanced some way, it could not exploit its success. Worse than that: the German command concentrated in the Kramatorsk area a substantial force that was capable of cutting off the Soviet units that had pushed ahead. According to Khrushchev, he telephoned Stalin twice to ask him to authorize the retreat of the Soviet divisions and the winding up of the Kharkov operation. On both occasions he spoke to Malenkov, as Stalin refused to answer the phone; Malenkov relayed the instruction that the offensive was to continue. Zhukov's account of the same event claims that Stalin refrained from calling off the operation merely because the command of the South-Western Front had assured him that the German Kramatorsk group constituted no great threat and that the Soviet forces could sustain the offensive. Whichever is the accurate account, the Red Army suffered a severe defeat, and no fewer than 150,000 Soviet soldiers were taken prisoner.

A few days later Stalin summoned Khrushchev to Moscow. He was prepared for the worst—even arrest. Stalin kept him waiting for several days before sending him back to the front, this time to Stalingrad,

where he was appointed a member of the Military Council. General A. I. Yeremenko was in command of the Soviet forces there.

One of the tasks that fell to Khrushchev was the direction of the guerrilla movement in the Ukraine, which had expanded considerably. Hundreds of guerrilla units and 'diversionary groups' had been formed in the occupied territory, and underground obkoms, raikoms and gorkoms had been instituted. Later there was even an underground Central Committee of the Ukrainian Communist Party, which was subordinate to the formally constituted Central Committee headed by Khrushchev. The movement certainly hampered the occupying forces and inflicted on them a certain amount of damage – but under its protective cover various nationalist groups grew up, some of which operated under the aegis of the occupying power, and these made it their task to undermine Communist influence among the population, particularly in Western Ukraine, the centre of the Ukrainian Insurgent Army and the Ukrainian People's Revolutionary Army. As well as the Germans, the Communist-led guerrilla forces were frequently obliged to fight the nationalists.

On 25 December 1942 a ceremony was held in Moscow to commemorate the twenty-fifth anniversary of Soviet Ukraine. As Khrushchev was not present, since he was serving with the army outside Stalingrad, a telegram was sent from Moscow to 'Comrade N. S. Khrushchev, leader of the Bolsheviks in the Army who are fighting the enemy'. The tribute was merited: Khrushchev was fulfilling his duties admirably. Although his responsibilities were broadly political, strategy and tactics were rarely discussed in his absence, and he occasionally took it upon himself to solve purely military problems. On one occasion, for example, aware that not all was as it should be on the flanks of the Stalingrad front, he travelled across the steppes, down the Volga from Stalingrad to Astrakhan. In a number of places he found army units that were quite unfit for combat, and Astrakhan itself proved to be unprepared to withstand any serious German attack. To strengthen this southern sector of the front, he issued several orders on his own authority and took steps to ensure that the region was better protected. Generally, however, his task was to maintain the morale of the soldiers and their commanders, and in this respect he influenced the outcome of the battle for Stalingrad, which was decisive not only for the Patriotic War but also for the Second World War as a whole. He was with the troops constantly, in the thick of the fighting. Once he was with a unit that had taken shelter in a hut not far from the front line. Enemy shells were exploding all around the

hut, and the commander of the unit suggested that they should all move to a less dangerous spot. Minutes later a large shell scored a direct hit on the hut that they had just vacated. The soldiers could recount many such tales; most ended tragically.

Khrushchev participated in preparations for the Soviet Army's counter-offensive in November 1942, which ended in the encirclement and, after two months of bitter fighting, the surrender of the German Army. The Stalingrad army group was disbanded, and he was sent to the Southern Front, commanded first by Yeremenko and then by R. Malinovsky. In the course of several successful offensives, the troops of the Southern Front liberated Rostov-on-Don and certain areas of the Ukraine. On 17 February 1943 the forces of the Voronezh army group entered Kharkov, but there they were surprised by a German counter-offensive, and they had to withdraw in haste. Lieutenant-General Khrushchev received his first military medal, the Order of Suvorov, second class, 'for the skilful and courageous conduct of military operations'.

The victory of the Soviet Army at the Battle of Kursk, the most important engagement of the Patriotic War after the Battle of Stalingrad, opened the way to the Ukraine. Kharkov was liberated for the second time at the end of August; during September and October salutes were fired in Moscow, one after another, to mark the liberation of the other principal towns of the Ukraine. On 2 November the troops stationed on the right bank of the Dnieper, at the Lyutezh bridgehead, received orders from General Vatutin, commander of the First Ukrainian army group, and Khrushchev to advance on Kiev. Three days later the Soviet troops were forcing their way through the suburbs of the city, and during the night of 5–6 November Kiev was cleared of enemy forces.

Khrushchev was with the troops as they took Kiev, and with them he entered the burning city. A few hours later he was joined by other leaders of the Republic. On 8 November he sent Stalin a report on the situation in Kiev in which he described the extensive damage that the city had suffered: most of its inhabitants had been forced to leave; many had been killed; others had gone into hiding in the surrounding countryside. He wrote: 'Kiev is like a city of the dead.'⁵

Once the Soviet Army had consolidated its hold on the reconquered territory and had beaten off a German counter-attack on Kiev, it began to prepare for a new offensive, towards the south, which was planned for the spring of 1944. Khrushchev did not follow the troops, however; he had been given a new task to fulfil – the reconstruction of the

Republic's economy, destroyed by the war, and the restoration of order in the Ukraine. On 6 February 1944 the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the Ukrainian SSR appointed him Chairman of the Council of People's Commissars of the Ukraine. He remained First Secretary of the Republic's Central Committee.

Reconstruction: Successes and Setbacks

For Khrushchev the Patriotic War was over – although he continued to wear his general's uniform constantly – and the preoccupations of civilian life demanded his attention again. His transfer from army headquarters and dug-outs to a spacious office in Kiev did not presage a leisured life, however: conditions in the liberated regions of the Ukraine were very difficult. Most of the machinery and equipment on the collective farms had been destroyed, and farmers were forced to sow their fields with the aid of hoes and baskets made of bast. Women could often be seen pulling ploughs. Almost all of the cattle had been slaughtered, and the farms had to be restocked with cattle from Central Asia, Siberia and elsewhere. Most of the able-bodied young men had either been transported to Germany, where they were being exploited as a source of cheap labour, or sent to the front. Industry was sadly depleted; the mines and power stations were deserted; the roads and railways were decaying.

Khrushchev devoted a great deal of energy to searching for reserves that had not yet been tapped. After visiting certain key areas of the Republic, he compiled an inventory of the deficiencies that he had noted and drafted proposals for solving the Ukraine's problems, which were published in the press in the form of letters to appropriate obkoms and obliskoms. Despite the shortage of housing and manpower, he supervised the speedy reconstruction of industry that followed in the wake of a decision to replace the factories that had been evacuated to the eastern part of the USSR in 1941. Optimism was in the air. And his efforts did not go unrewarded: speeches given at the sixth session of the Supreme Soviet of the Ukrainian SSR referred to 'Stalin's true comrade-in-arms' and 'the man whose name is linked with the years of the Ukraine's prosperity and its liberation from the German aggressors – N. S. Khrushchev'. On his fiftieth birthday, 17

April 1944, the newspapers published not only greetings from the Central Committee, the Council of the People's Commissars, the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR and enterprises and organizations all over the country but also articles that recorded the reminiscences of writers who had met Khrushchev – M. Rylsky, P. Tychina and others. A decree awarding him a second Order of Lenin marked the occasion, which was celebrated triumphantly throughout the Ukraine – but for Khrushchev the day was a sad one. His birthday coincided with the funeral of General Vatutin, who had died from a wound sustained in a battle with a group of Ukrainian nationalists. Khrushchev was one of those who carried the coffin at the solemn ceremony held in Kiev that day.

The nationalists remained a thorn in the flesh of the Ukraine. Even after mid-October 1944, when the entire Republic was at last freed from German occupation, the UPA, the UNRA and three other nationalist groups, the Banderists, the Melnikovites and 'Bulba's men', were still active in the forests and rural districts of the western part of the Ukraine. Their numbers were swollen by former policemen, village headmen and others who had compromised themselves by collaboration with the occupying forces. The war waged against them was a fierce one. Part of the population of Western Ukraine sympathized with their cause, but many other inhabitants of the region's rural areas were forced, under threat of violence, to offer them food and shelter. In an effort to emasculate the movement, hundreds of thousands of people who lived in the villages and hamlets of Western Ukraine were transported to Siberia. As for the nationalists, most of them were killed in battles with units of the Soviet Army and the MVD troops, while others were captured and sent to corrective labour camps for the maximum term. Only a few managed to survive in hiding or to escape to the West.

Theirs was an extreme form of nationalism. A milder form was manifest almost everywhere in the Ukraine, and it was officially encouraged: local politicians, artists and writers were lionized; a Ukrainian encyclopaedia was published; numerous articles were written about Bogdan Khmelnytsky, the seventeenth-century Cossack leader who fought against Polish rule, and the town of Pereyaslav (where the decision had been taken in 1654 to unite the Ukraine with Russia) was renamed Pereyaslav-Khmelnytsky; the Russian Orthodox Church was legalized in the Ukraine, as elsewhere, and some of the churches that had been destroyed by the Germans were rebuilt. Once again Moscow looked to the Ukraine to supply the country's grain and

called on the Republic to boost its production of meat and other agricultural products.

VE Day found Khrushchev in Kiev, where he was greeted by an exultant demonstration. On 24 June 1945, as members of the Soviet armed forces marched triumphantly across Red Square during Moscow's Victory Parade, he stood on the tribune of Lenin's mausoleum in the company of Stalin and his closest colleagues.

He seemed to have gained the complete confidence of the country's leader, who at that time followed attentively the activities of those in whom he placed his trust. One of the advantages that Khrushchev enjoyed was that he had spent much of his time not in Moscow but in Kiev, where he was protected from what Edward Crankshaw has described as 'the intrigue, the flattery and the backbiting that went on in Stalin's shadow'.¹ Of course, Stalin forced all around him to acknowledge their dependence on him, and Khrushchev did not escape this constant and oppressive pressure altogether. Nevertheless, he wielded great power and authority as Stalin's personal representative in the Ukraine. He was not immune to the temptations associated with near-absolute power, but his position afforded him an opportunity to harness his considerable natural abilities. He was undoubtedly less well educated than men like Zhdanov or Voznesensky, and his knowledge of Marxist theory rested on shakier foundations; yet he knew more than anyone else in Stalin's immediate circle about the problems of workers and peasants (even Stalin referred to him on one occasion as a *narodnik*, a 'populist'). He was certainly a popular leader among many Ukrainians. Indeed, in the Ukraine the cult of Stalin was supplemented by a Khrushchev cult. Greetings to him of one kind or another were published in the press nearly every day, and the papers often carried pictures of him. He was also regarded with warmth and respect by middle-ranking Party officials, whose privileges did not exempt them from working as hard as he did.

The problems that they faced were manifold. Although restoration work had begun by the end of 1943, little could be accomplished in the Ukraine until the war had ended, and production levels were 75 per cent lower than they had been before the outbreak of war. Khrushchev was not prepared to direct the affairs of the Republic through conferences or discussions over the telephone; he travelled about the Ukraine constantly, accompanied by groups of officials of the Council of People's Commissars or the Central Committee. In July 1945 he visited all the southern oblasts of the Republic; in the autumn he spent several weeks in Western Ukraine and the former Sub-Carpathian

Ukraine, now united with the Republic. By that time changes were taking place everywhere.

Hundreds and thousands of older Ukrainian soldiers had been demobilized, together with those of their officers who had not undergone special training. Their return was greeted with celebrations in every Ukrainian city, although many Ukrainians were unable to share in the general rejoicing, since the men who were being welcomed so rapturously represented only a small proportion of those who had left their homes for the front four years before. Most had fallen in battle; the whole of the Ukraine was covered with mass graves. The fate of the prisoners of war who had survived Hitler's camps was harsh. They were generally regarded as having acquitted themselves dishonourably, and those who had yielded to German propaganda were treated extremely severely. The officers were generally sentenced to imprisonment; although most ordinary soldiers were permitted to return to their homes, they were deprived of certain rights, as were many of the Ukrainians who had returned from Germany after years of forced labour. In some villages the repatriated made up half of the population. The labour force was also swelled by the hundreds of thousands of workers who had been evacuated to eastern parts of the country in 1941 and were now returning to the Ukraine and, somewhat later, by younger demobilized soldiers, especially the women and girls who had been called up to perform various auxiliary services in the Soviet Army.

Industry and agriculture gradually revived. In October 1945, at a plenum of the Central Committee, Khrushchev reported that the output of coal in the Republic had risen to 40 per cent of the 1940 total, steel to 23 per cent, rolled iron to 30 per cent, manganese to 54 per cent and iron ore to 34 per cent. The area of the Republic that was under cultivation had reached 71 per cent of the pre-war total, and the production of grain and sugar-beet had risen respectively to 80 per cent and 50 per cent of output in 1940. But the Ukraine was quite unable to meet the requirements of the procurement plan for 1945 – tens of thousands of hectares of grain and maize remained unharvested because of the shortage of men and machinery. It was easier to sow than to reap.

Worse lay ahead. At the end of 1945 there was cause for anxiety: little rain had fallen during the autumn, and at the onset of winter some of the winter-sown crops were damaged by frost. Yet the targets that had been set for the Ukraine were even more ambitious than they had been the year before. The republic was under an obligation to supply the state with 400 million poods of grain (only marginally less than the

amount specified for 1940) and over 60 per cent of the meat requirement for the same year, in spite of the fact that the numbers of pigs and cattle raised in the Ukraine were far lower than they had been before the war. The Central Committee took steps to promote agricultural production: it ordered farmers to use their cows as draught animals – which certainly facilitated sowing but reduced milk yields sharply – and decentralized the manufacture of spare parts for tractors and other machinery. Khrushchev called on farmers to sow more millet and maize, affirming that the latter was the solution to the grain problem. The crisis was not to be so easily overcome, however.

The winter crops had largely perished and had to be resown. The farmers' scrawny cows did not have the strength to pull the heavy ploughs. Repairs to machinery were delayed, as there was still a labour shortage. But it was the weather that dealt the most severe blow: drought spread from Moldavia all over the south-west of the Ukraine and had gripped not only the whole of the Republic but also the Volga region by the summer. Although south Russia and the eastern regions of the Soviet Union escaped its worst ravages and the country's urban population had just enough to eat, the rural areas suffered appallingly, and in the Ukraine villagers were starving. Khrushchev appealed to Moscow: he regarded rationing and the provision of soup kitchens as essential, since the peasants, weak with hunger, were quite unable to work. Far from supplying the country with its needs, the harvest in the Ukraine had yielded only 200 million poods of grain – half the amount specified for state procurement – and the Republic itself was desperately in need of help. Stalin's response was to send Khrushchev an abusive telegram. A further reprisal was to follow.

At the very beginning of March 1947, as a result of a directive from Stalin, the composition of the leading organs of the Ukrainian Party underwent radical change. A report of the plenum of the Central Committee, held in Kiev on 3 March, read as follows:

With a view to strengthening Party and soviet work, the plenum decided to separate the posts of Chairman of the Council of People's Commissars and First Secretary of the Central Committee of the Ukrainian Communist Party. The plenum elected L. M. Kaganovich as First Secretary of the Central Committee; N. S. Khrushchev remains Chairman of the Council of People's Commissars.

A few days later, at his own request, Khrushchev was also relieved of his duties as First Secretary of the Party's Kiev obkom and gorkom.

Abruptly, he had ceased to be Stalin's viceroy in the Ukraine. He

accepted the decision in silence, moved only to comment, with tact and acuity, at the session of the Supreme Soviet of the Ukraine held soon afterwards that he had found all the criticism that had been directed at him extremely helpful and that the election of 'the outstanding member of the Bolshevik Party and the Soviet Government, member of the all-Union Politburo, L. M. Kaganovich' would undoubtedly contribute to all the work that was being carried out in the Republic, including that of the Council of People's Commissars.

The news of his appointment was not entirely welcome to Kaganovich either, who evidently reserved for himself the right to return to the capital as soon as he had 'strengthened Party work' in the Ukraine. In his time he had promoted Khrushchev to a responsible post in Moscow; now he was obliged to intervene in the affairs of his former protégé. He sought to get on well with Khrushchev, however, and to work mainly through the Council of People's Commissars (now renamed, in the Ukraine and elsewhere, the Council of Ministers); in practice he and Khrushchev shared the work, Khrushchev retaining responsibility for agricultural production and Kaganovich supervising the revival of industry and the cultural affairs of the Republic. The partnership was moderately successful, although the two men did not see eye to eye on every occasion. The Ukraine was the beneficiary of substantial support from the United Nations, which amounted to over \$200 million worth of foodstuffs, medical supplies, manufactured goods and other forms of aid;² the 1947 harvest was outstanding, and the Republic more than fulfilled its quota – ahead of schedule; in the course of the year industrial production rose by 30 per cent. Materially, the Ukraine was burgeoning, but it staggered under the ideological onslaught initiated by Kaganovich at the instigation of Stalin and Zhdanov, who desired the extirpation of all those who still embraced 'formalism' and 'nationalism'. The chairman of the Ukrainian Writers' Union at that time was Rylsky, a poet, a scholar and a Party activist since 1943. During the war he had been awarded a Stalin Prize for his collection of verses that included 'A Word about our Motherland', 'The Bright Weapon' and several others. Now he was selected as the target of ideological persecution. Not only was he ousted from the chairmanship of the Writers' Union, but also *Pravda Ukrainy* published an article on 20 November 1947 that contained the following passage:

Rylsky wrote a number of positive works after he had joined the ranks of Soviet men of letters. However, in recent years his creative work has

testified to a reversion to his old nationalist views that are hostile to our Soviet literature. . . . In such works as 'I am a Son of the Land of Soviets' and 'A Word about our Motherland' Rylsky assumes a spurious form of patriotism but hints at ideals that are in fact alien to Soviet patriotism.

The Ukrainian intelligentsia was astounded by this vicious and wholly unjustified attack – and by many others. When Podgorny, who headed the Ukrainian Communist Party during the 1960s, spoke at the Twenty-Second Party Congress in Moscow fourteen years later, he said:

[Kaganovich] surrounded himself with a gang of unprincipled sycophants. He destroyed cadres that were devoted to the Party and persecuted and terrorized leading officials of the Republic. He was a sadist: he enjoyed humiliating activists and members of the intelligentsia, degrading them, threatening them with arrest and imprisonment. It is with good reason that even now many Party and soviet workers refer to the period when Kaganovich was in the Ukraine as the 'black days' of the Republic. . . . As he considered himself infallible, Kaganovich consulted only himself when it came to questions of first importance to the Republic, ignoring the Central Committee – and very often he came to the wrong conclusions. Since he was a master of intrigue, he charged prominent Ukrainian writers and some highly placed officials with 'nationalism', with no justification whatsoever. . . . Comrade Khrushchev, relying on his immense prestige among the working people of the Ukraine and on their support, did everything he could to foil Kaganovich's evil plots.³

These remarks were somewhat exaggerated: 1947 was not a 'black year' for the Ukraine, and relations between Kaganovich and Khrushchev were not as barbed as Podgorny implied. Nevertheless, Kaganovich's months in power were certainly harsh ones, and there was widespread relief when his rule ended, as suddenly as it had begun, on 19 December 1947. He was appointed one of the vice-chairmen of the USSR Council of Ministers, an appointment that entailed his immediate departure from the Ukraine. The Central Committee of the Ukrainian Communist Party decided to maintain the division between the two highest posts in the Republic and recommended that D. S. Korotchenko be appointed to the chairmanship of the Council of Ministers. Khrushchev was re-elected to his former post of First Secretary of the Central Committee.

At the beginning of 1948, a decisive year in many respects, the thirtieth anniversary of Soviet Ukraine was triumphantly celebrated,

both by Ukrainians and by guests from all the other Union Republics. Thousands of people were decorated with orders and medals, among them Khrushchev, Korotchenko and Kaganovich, who all received the Order of Lenin. The celebrations could not disguise the fact that the political atmosphere in the Ukraine was still strained, however.

Although Khrushchev was able to protect Rylsky from any further attacks, it would be naive to suppose that the pogroms that raged through Moscow in 1948–9 did not affect the Ukraine, where geneticists opposed to Stalin's views, 'epigones of bourgeois music', kulaks, 'kinless cosmopolitans' and 'alien elements' were all persecuted relentlessly, and where enforced collectivization continued (albeit less painfully than between 1930 and 1932). If Khrushchev did not initiate this policy, at least he did not protest against it. He turned his attention instead to the construction of a gas pipe-line between Dashava and Kiev and to the changing fortunes of agriculture. The unwavering attention that he was devoting to the solution of agricultural problems and the able work of V. Matskevich, the Ukraine's Minister of Agriculture, were producing results. The 1948 harvest was even more successful than that of the previous year; the Ukraine more than fulfilled the requirements of the year's plan, providing the state with not only 115 million poods of grain more than in 1947 but also 33 million poods more than in the pre-war year of 1940, even though neither the degree of mechanization nor the number of people engaged in agriculture had regained pre-war levels. Naturally, the collective and state farms had been under great pressure to achieve these results, but the moral buoyancy that was characteristic of the first years after the victory over Nazi Germany still persisted.

In January 1949 the Sixteenth Congress of the Ukrainian Communist Party was held in Kiev. In his report on the activity of the Central Committee over a period of nearly ten years Khrushchev had much to speak of with pride: the defence of Kiev and Odessa, the guerrilla movement in the Ukraine, the part played by Ukrainians in the Patriotic War, the success of reconstruction in the Republic, where by 1948 industrial production had risen almost to pre-war levels and agriculture was thriving again. There were, of course, some topics on which he preferred not to touch: the reasons for the defeats suffered by the Red Army in the Ukraine, the terror on the eve of the war, the deportation of thousands of people from Western Ukraine, the low prices paid to the collective farms for their produce, the derisory wages of the collective farmers and workers on the state farms – and much else besides.

Khrushchev was re-elected First Secretary of the Ukrainian Communist Party, but his tenure of the post was brief. At the end of 1949, after a year spent on resolving the endemic problems of agriculture, attending conferences organized for teachers and architects, supervising the reconstruction of the Kreshchatik, Kiev's main street, and promoting enthusiastically (but unsuccessfully) the merits of China millet, he was absorbed by preparations for the celebration of Stalin's seventieth birthday. A few days before this event the First Secretary of the Moscow obkom, G. M. Popov, was appointed Minister of Urban Construction. On the recommendation of the Central Committee of the Communist Party, Khrushchev was elected to take his place and, furthermore, to assume the responsibilities of First Secretary of the Moscow gorkom. He was released from his duties in the Ukraine and bidden to return to the capital forthwith. His departure marked the start of a new phase of his career.

PART THREE

Towards a New Order
1950–1955

Return to Moscow

Formally, Khrushchev's new appointment could be regarded as demotion. In order to pre-empt such an interpretation and to extend his privileges and scope, the Central Committee elected him to a post as one of its secretaries – an honour accorded only to Kirov and Kaganovich in the past. Stalin looked on Khrushchev benevolently in those months. At the ceremony held at the Bolshoi Theatre to celebrate the leader's seventieth birthday Mao Tse-tung sat on Stalin's right and Khrushchev on his left.

From the moment of his arrival in Moscow Khrushchev was faced with dozens of economic and political problems. One particularly thorny one he handled with great dexterity. Not long before his appointment the entire leadership of the Party's Leningrad obkom had been purged, and thousands of Party and soviet officials had been arrested. There were those who were keen to organize a similar purge in Moscow, and Khrushchev was charged with the task of checking on the work of Popov in his capacity as former First Secretary of the Moscow obkom and gorkom and chairman of the Moscow soviet. A commission headed by Khrushchev uncovered a number of financial anomalies but, as Khrushchev reported to Stalin, no political offences. Largely to his credit, no Moscow purge ever took place.

The city was in the throes of massive reconstruction. Work on the Metro had continued throughout the war, and the underground lines had been considerably extended since Khrushchev had last inspected the progress of the work. Not long after his arrival in the capital he opened officially the section of the circle line that runs between the Kursk and Crimea stations. Furthermore, the years 1950 and 1951 saw the beginnings of an extensive house-building programme in Moscow, where housing was generally extremely inadequate, in spite of the construction that had taken place during the 1930s and 1940s. Most Muscovites still lived in overcrowded communal flats, often two families to a room. Tens of thousands of people had lived in temporary

wooden barracks for years on end. In 1951 plans were drawn up for enough houses to provide between 700,000 and 800,000 square metres of living space; they were to be sited on the wasteland to the south-west of the city and in the area through which the Novo-Peschanye streets now run.

Inevitably, however, Khrushchev was drawn to the problems posed by the state of agriculture in Moscow oblast. In January and February 1950 he toured several raions and was astonished by the low levels of production and the extreme poverty of the peasant households. The cause was plain: when the devastated areas of the country were being restored, the state had invested mainly in the oblasts and raions from which the quickest and largest returns could be expected – those in the black-earth zone of the south. Elsewhere many raions had received no state aid at all. The policy was unjust and short-sighted, particularly as the great industrial centres of the north could have ensured the profitability of livestock breeding and vegetable farming. Khrushchev was also surprised by the size of the farms, which were tiny by comparison with those of the Ukraine and quite unsuitable for efficient commercial farming, and by the villages, of which only 20 per cent boasted more than sixty households. He proposed that small collective farms – in 1949 26 per cent of them had less than 100 hectares under cultivation – be amalgamated and that the little villages should unite to form larger settlements. To support his arguments, he submitted to the Central Committee a proposal that Moscow oblast and other oblasts close to the capital should be transformed into a resource base for the city, supplying it with potatoes, vegetables, meat and milk. The proposal was approved.

By the time of the 1950 spring sowing most of the smaller collective farms had been amalgamated. Whereas at the end of 1949 there had been 6,069 collective farms, by the autumn of 1950 there were only 1,541, and on average each had 772 hectares under cultivation, 165 households and 264 able-bodied farmers. Despite bad weather, the grain and potato harvest was quite good by local standards, and Moscow oblast fulfilled its quota ahead of time. Its success was consolidated by a special resolution of the Party Central Committee and the Council of Ministers of the USSR that sanctioned the amalgamation of small collective farms.

This and certain other projects – the enlargement of livestock and poultry farms, the amalgamation of small fields, the implementation of land-improvement measures and the selection of more experienced cadres for the direction of collective and state farms – were successful.

There were also some failures. For Khrushchev it was not enough to urge farmers to plant maize, China millet or sugar-beet; through the columns of *Moskovsky Bolshevik* he also advanced the notion of establishing plantations of water melons from the southern Volga region, melons from Central Asia, Jerusalem artichokes, pumpkins and even vines. In one of his speeches he advocated the winter sowing of sugar-beet and sunflowers, the seeds of which, he said, should be sown in November, when the fields were covered with the first snow. Here and there these schemes were adopted with some temporary success, but in most cases they ended in complete failure. It was a good thing that such experiments were tried only on small plots.

And then there was the question of the 'agro-towns', an idea that had occurred to Khrushchev while he was in the Ukraine, when four large collective farms in Cherkassk oblast had decided to unite to form a single, gigantic farm. In place of four villages – located in unsuitable spots – one farm centre was to be constructed, with a population of between 10,000 and 12,000. The task of planning this 'agro-town' was entrusted to the Ukrainian Academy of Architecture. The project itself was sane enough. The farms that were to be united were rich by the standards of the time; their members received 4 or 5 kilograms of grain per working day. All that they needed was a sensible plan, a certain amount of credit from the state and some building materials; a construction brigade was to be formed from among the collective farmers themselves. However, a project that was at that time an exception even in the Ukraine, where agriculture had less to contend with, was wholly inappropriate for the non-black-earth zone, where collective farms had neither the resources and labour nor the need to create enormous units.

Nevertheless, in the summer of 1950, on Khrushchev's initiative, a collective farm in the Gremyachensk raion of Moscow oblast called the 'Behests of Ilyich' began to draw up plans for an 'agro-town', assisted by a group of planners in the capital. To promote the scheme, a permanent exhibition of building work on collective farms and in the countryside generally was organized in Moscow. In the spring of 1951 *Pravda* published an article by Khrushchev on the problems raised by current construction work on farms in which, side by side with several other practical proposals, there appeared the suggestion that 'agro-towns' be created all over the oblast. Malenkov, who was the member of the Politburo responsible for agriculture and whose unfamiliarity with the problems of the countryside had left Khrushchev considerable scope for action, was dismayed; he found the scheme premature. What

mattered far more, however, was that Stalin did not like the article. The next day *Pravda* published a brief note 'from the editorial board', which read: 'Through an editorial oversight the article by Comrade N. S. Khrushchev, "On building and improvements on collective farms", was not accompanied by a note from the editorial board stating that it was published "for discussion". This note corrects that mistake.' Soon afterwards a secret circular was distributed to Party organizations. It declared that Khrushchev's article was misguided. Khrushchev was hurt by this, but there was nothing he could do except admit his error. Only much later, when he was at the top of the Party hierarchy, did he succeed in overturning this judgement, but he never proposed the creation of 'agro-towns' again.

This reverse did not affect his position, however. At the end of the summer of 1952, after a year in which agriculture had been largely stagnant as a result of high taxes and low prices, the Party's attention was focused principally on preparations for the Nineteenth Party Congress, the first for over thirteen years. Stalin was not strong enough to deliver the Central Committee's report from the tribune himself, so the task was entrusted to Malenkov. M. Z. Saburov was to report on the directives for the fifth Five-Year Plan and Khrushchev on changes to the Party's rules. The outlines of the latter report were published on 27 September: one of the proposed changes was the alteration of the Party's former name, the All-Union Communist Party (Bolsheviks), to the Communist Party of the Soviet Union.

The Congress opened on 5 October 1952. A new Central Committee was elected – not before time, as its composition had hardly altered in the years since the last Party Congress, in spite of the emergence of a whole new generation of military, economic and political leaders – and at its first plenum Stalin proposed the election of a large Presidium, to consist of twenty-five members and eleven candidates for membership, all of whom had already been selected by him. Subsequently, he proposed that a smaller body, a Bureau of the Presidium, be formed from some of its members; this included neither Molotov nor Mikoyan, but it did include Khrushchev. Later still he advocated that five members of the Bureau should be charged with the task of solving some of the country's most pressing problems – the group comprised Stalin himself, Malenkov, Beria, Bulganin and Khrushchev.

Stalin was very cheerful. Nothing he did appeared to lend substance to the rumours that were circulating about his plans to deport the Jews to eastern areas of the country and to carry out a fresh purge of the Party's upper ranks, a move that would have threatened Molotov,

Mikoyan and Voroshilov in particular and even Beria. Anxiety became acute at the beginning of 1953, when a large group of Kremlin doctors was arrested and accused not only of spying but also of murdering a number of Party leaders. The Minister in charge of the KGB, Abakumov, was also arrested, as were many of his department's officials in Georgia. But Stalin continued to invite his colleagues to dine with him nearly every day. Khrushchev describes the gathering that took place on 28 February 1953, the last he was to attend:

On Saturday there was a call from Stalin's office to say that Stalin was receiving at the Kremlin and that we were invited. No meeting of the Bureau was scheduled, and the invitation was extended to me personally and also to Malenkov, Beria and Bulganin – no one else. . . . Supper [at Stalin's dacha] went on for a long time. Stalin called it a dinner. We finished at about five or six in the morning – that was the time that those dinners usually ended. Stalin was cheerful after the meal . . . and there was nothing to indicate that anything surprising could happen. We said goodbye to Comrade Stalin and left. I remember that when we were in the entrance hall Stalin came out as usual to see us off. He joked a lot and was in good spirits. He brandished his forefinger or his fist and prodded me in the stomach, calling me 'Mikita' – he always used the Ukrainian form of my name when he was in a good mood. Well, we left in a good mood too, for nothing had happened during the dinner, and those dinners had not always ended on such a happy note.¹

The next day Khrushchev awaited the usual summons to supper, but none came. Bewilderment and alarm had gripped Stalin's dacha, where his private rooms were protected by armour-plated doors fitted with automatic sliding panels through which trays were passed and by an elaborate system of signals that controlled the movements of his staff and guards. That evening the servant on duty received the customary instruction 'Make tea', but it was not followed by the signal for 'Bring the tea in'. The alarm was raised. The guards requested the servant to check on Stalin, who was found lying on the floor of his dining-room. When the members of the Presidium, summoned urgently by the guards, arrived at the dacha, they found their leader unconscious on a couch. The doctors diagnosed brain haemorrhage, paralysis of the right side of the body and loss of the power of speech. Stalin's condition was very grave.

The Succession: Contention and Conspiracy

On 5 March, a few days after his first brain haemorrhage, Stalin died. Watching over him in the last minutes of his life were not only his doctors but also Malenkov, Beria and Khrushchev, who had kept an almost continuous vigil beside the sick man. (Bulganin had shared the burden of care and concern but that day he was resting.) During those long hours Khrushchev's feelings had been equivocal. He was full of pity for Stalin, and occasionally his eyes were blinded by tears; but he was also very apprehensive about the future of the country and of the Party.

Before Lenin died the antagonism between Trotsky and Stalin had caused the leader grave anxiety, since he feared that their enmity might divide the Party. His 'Testament', dictated in December 1922, had been an attempt to avert this disaster. In it he had advocated the reorganization of the political structure of the Soviet Union and, in a postscript dated January 1923, the removal of Stalin from the post of General Secretary of the Central Committee. On the eve of Stalin's death, however, hostility was rife among several members of the Presidium – Molotov, Malenkov and Kaganovich, for example – yet Stalin had made no effort to reconcile them. On the contrary, he had taken every possible step to inflame the animosities of those who were close to him. Khrushchev found the antipathies of his colleagues alarming enough, but what disturbed him most was the possibility that after Stalin's death power would pass to Beria. He was convinced that nothing but harm could come of that and was prepared to use every available means to prevent it. His fear was shared by many of the other Party leaders, but it was Khrushchev who took the initiative.

On the day before Stalin's death Khrushchev had raised the issue with Bulganin. The two men had found that they were generally in agreement. The moment Stalin died, they decided, Beria should be prevented from resuming direct control of the Ministry of State

Security (the MGB), the most influential organ of state power. His protégé, Abakumov, had already been arrested. But Khrushchev's accord with Bulganin was not enough: they needed to gain the assent of Malenkov, who had been the most powerful figure in Stalin's circle during the last year of his life. It turned out that Beria had anticipated Khrushchev's move, however, and had reached an understanding with Malenkov about the problems of power-sharing. Consequently, when Stalin died and Beria assumed control of the MGB once again Malenkov refused to discuss the question with Khrushchev. 'Let's get everyone together,' he said. 'Then we'll talk.'

Immediately all former members of the Politburo, the principal members of the Council of Ministers and some of the members of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet were summoned to a conference at the Kremlin. Although the resolutions of the meeting were published the next day as joint decisions of the Central Committee, the Council of Ministers and the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet, in fact no more than twenty people were present. No acrimony was evident – perhaps those who attended the meeting were conscious that a battle for power at that stage, when Stalin's body was still lying in the Hall of Columns in the Palace of Soviets, would be ill-timed and inappropriate. The decisions that were taken represented a compromise and favoured none of the rival groups that had surrounded Stalin. Everyone was agreed that at the highest level the organs of state power should be reduced in number, and a resolution was passed that abolished the enlarged Presidium that had been created after the Nineteenth Party Congress – in spite of the fact that neither its members nor all the members of the Central Committee were present to endorse this decision. The new Presidium was to consist of Malenkov, Beria, Molotov, Voroshilov, Khrushchev, Bulganin, Kaganovich, Mikoyan, Saburov and Pervukhin. Related Ministries were amalgamated. Beria's proposal that Malenkov be elected Chairman of the Council of Ministers met with no objection. Malenkov, for his part, proposed that Beria be placed in charge of the combined Ministries of Internal Affairs (MVD) and State Security (MGB). Neither this suggestion nor the appointment of Beria as one of the vice-chairmen of the Council of Ministers encountered opposition – Khrushchev thought it best to say nothing on that occasion, although he did propose that Bulganin should take over the Ministry of the Armed Forces. His proposal was accepted, and two deputies to Bulganin were appointed: A. M. Vasilevsky, the outgoing Minister, and Zhukov. These appointments played an important role in subsequent events. Molotov became

Minister of Foreign Affairs again, and Vyshinsky was appointed his first deputy. Molotov, Bulganin, Kaganovich and Mikoyan joined Beria as vice-chairmen of the Council of Ministers and constituted the Presidium of that body. Voroshilov was elected Chairman of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet, and Shvernik was recommended to the post of Chairman of the all-Union Central Trade Council.

As for Khrushchev, it was generally agreed that he should concentrate on his work as Secretary of the Central Committee and should therefore be released from his duties as First Secretary of the Moscow obkom and gorkom. In fact, he took charge of the entire Secretariat of the Central Committee, although the post of First Secretary had not yet been formally instituted. He was the only member of the Secretariat who was also a member of the Presidium of the Central Committee; the other Secretaries who were appointed that day – Ignatyev, Pospelov and Shatalin – did not share that distinction. Khrushchev was also appointed to the chairmanship of the commission that was responsible for organizing Stalin's funeral.

These resolutions and appointments are usually regarded as marking the emergence of the first triumvirate, composed of Malenkov, Beria and Molotov, the three men who addressed the assembly of mourners at Stalin's funeral and whose names headed the list of the members of the Presidium. In terms of actual rather than nominal political power, however, the first triumvirate comprised Malenkov, Beria and Khrushchev, for Molotov, in spite of his reputation and standing, controlled no real power in the Soviet Union – he directed only the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the activities of the Soviet embassies abroad. The power of Voroshilov, Chairman of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet, was also somewhat restricted. Khrushchev, on the other hand, had in his charge the entire Party apparatus – all its obkoms and gorkoms, all the departments of the Central Committee. Furthermore, at that time he had the full support of Bulganin and his deputy, Zhukov. Admittedly, Bulganin was a political lightweight, but he controlled the armed forces of the Soviet Union, and firm leadership could be provided both by Khrushchev and by Zhukov, who was still very popular among the officers.

The most influential position in the country in 1953 was that of Chairman of the Council of Ministers, which Stalin had held from 1940 until his death. The office of General Secretary of the Central Committee had been abolished. Of course, Stalin had remained both head of the Politburo and First Secretary of the Central Committee, but reference was rarely made to the latter post – a striking demonstra-

tion of the emasculation of the Party system as a component of the Soviet power structure. Khrushchev understood quite clearly what his first task was: to restore the Party and its Central Committee to their former position of authority. The successful fulfilment of this task would be contingent, he knew, on the removal – if necessary, the elimination – of Beria, an undertaking as complex as it was risky. In the first place, Beria headed the mighty apparatus of the MVD–MGB, which had branches and men in every organization and department in the country. Moreover, the guards who protected the Kremlin and all the members of the Soviet Government and Party Presidium were under his control. The Ministry of State Security was also in charge of the frontier guards and no fewer than ten divisions of MVD troops. Stalin's funeral had provided a good excuse for the stationing of most of these divisions near the capital and for quartering some of them in the city itself. They were infantry divisions, it is true, and lacked the support of heavy armament, but they could certainly have staged a military *coup d'état* had one been planned.

For a few brief weeks the country's new leadership abstained from overt political manoeuvres and presented a united front. In order to curry favour with the Soviet people, two further measures were introduced. The first was an amnesty for a large number of prisoners – but only those convicted of criminal offences, not the 'politicals'. The second was another reduction in the prices of foodstuffs and almost all consumer goods, the largest since the war. The price of bread and flour dropped by 10 per cent, of meat and related products by 15 per cent, of potatoes and vegetables by 50 per cent, of sugar and confectionery by 15 per cent and of vodka and other spirits by between 10 and 15 per cent. Clothing, footwear, toys and haberdashery dropped by between 10 and 15 per cent in general. The happy beneficiaries of these concessions were unaware of the intrigues that were absorbing the leadership of the country.

There can be no doubt that Beria was plotting to seize power or that his closest friends and deputies were involved in the conspiracy. They were constrained, however, by the need to make certain changes in the hierarchy of the MVD, to organize the release from prison of men such as Abakumov and to sack, among others, the head of the Investigation Department, Ryumin, who had fabricated the 'doctors' case'. That affair had been aimed, indirectly, at Beria himself, who was to have been denounced for failing to uncover the network of American-Jewish spies in key positions at the Kremlin hospital.

Beria organized Ryumin's dismissal without ceremony. On 4 April

1953 the Soviet press announced that the arrest of the doctors, on the orders of the 'former Ministry of State Security', had been irregular and unlawful. Furthermore, in order to obtain the confessions that it sought, the MGB had used 'methods of interrogation that [were] unacceptable and strictly proscribed by the law of the USSR'. All the doctors had now been released, the announcement went on, and the people responsible for their arrest had themselves been arrested and called to account. Leading articles in *Pravda* pointed out that provocateurs in the former MGB had attempted to 'kindle dissension among people of different nationalities' and to 'undermine the unity of the Soviet people, who were welded together by internationalism'. They had even sunk so low as to slander the outstanding Soviet actor Mikhoels. These articles marked the end of the campaign against the Jews of the Soviet Union that had played such a prominent part in the last months of Stalin's life.

Meanwhile Beria kept a careful eye on Khrushchev. His vigilance was matched by Khrushchev's sedulous scrutiny of all his activities. Khrushchev noted all the changes that were taking place in the administrative structure of the MVD: Beria regarded with deep suspicion any move instigated by Khrushchev or the other members of the Politburo. A typical incident occurred on 17 June, when a workers' revolt broke out in Berlin and Beria was instructed to fly to the city in person to assess the gravity of the situation and to take appropriate action. The next day a meeting of the Presidium of the Central Committee was convened in Moscow, at an unusual hour. Beria was informed of the meeting by friends, and he telephoned Moscow before it began. He was assured that the meeting was routine, that his presence was not essential and that his mission in Berlin was much more important. Beria caught the next available plane to Moscow.

Khrushchev proceeded very cautiously, observing all the rules of conspiracy. He had won over Bulganin in March. It did not prove difficult to enlist Zhukov's support. His most demanding task was to convince Malenkov, without whose concurrence Beria's arrest would be impossible. Eventually he managed to see Malenkov in private and persuaded him to lend his support to the plot. As head of Government and Chairman of the Central Committee's Presidium, Malenkov had perceived that Beria accorded him little respect and was making every effort to sustain the dominance of the MVD. Together the two men worked out the technicalities of Beria's arrest, which they agreed should take place during a meeting of the Presidium of either the Council of Ministers or the Central Committee.

Dozens of legends, many of them wholly improbable, have grown up around the arrest of Beria, which took place at the beginning of July 1953. Official reports later gave a skeletal account of his dismissal; Tvardovsky, editor-in-chief of the journal *Novy Mir*, supplied further details, which he had heard from Marshal Konev, one of the men who was involved in the arrest; Khrushchev himself recorded the events of that day in his memoirs. Although no claim is made for absolute accuracy, it is possible to reconstruct roughly what happened.

A joint meeting of the Presidium of the Council of Ministers and of the Central Committee was convened at the Kremlin. Just before the meeting Malenkov discussed the question of Beria's dismissal with Voroshilov and obtained his agreement. Khrushchev undertook to talk to Mikoyan, whom he invited to his dacha before they left for the Kremlin. Mikoyan's attitude was very cautious: he argued that Beria was not a hopeless case and that he might be persuaded to work within the framework of collective leadership. Khrushchev was alarmed by Mikoyan's reaction, but he did not wish to reconsider the matter — nor was he in a position to do so.

When they arrived at the Kremlin Khrushchev went straight to Malenkov's office, where he reported on his discussion with Mikoyan and learned of Voroshilov's acquiescence. He then took his place in the room where the meeting was to be held. A gun was concealed in his pocket. Beria came in carrying a briefcase, which he placed on a window sill. Waiting in the next room was a group of soldiers, under the leadership of Zhukov, who had on him a document authorizing the arrest and removal of Beria. It was signed by the Chairman of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet, Voroshilov. The signal for the start of the operation was to be given by a bell, which was connected to a button on Malenkov's desk.

Malenkov opened the meeting with the suggestion that Party matters be discussed, and he called on Khrushchev to speak. Khrushchev delivered a lengthy speech, in which he claimed that as long ago as 1938, at a plenum of the Central Committee, Grigori Kaminsky had revealed facts from which it could be deduced that in 1918 Beria had been in the pay of both the British intelligence service and the Musavatists, who had fought the Communists in an effort to establish an independent Muslim Azerbaijan. But, like so many other members of the Central Committee, Kaminsky had been arrested — although all were honest men and excellent Bolsheviks. Khrushchev accused Beria of conniving at the promotion of Georgians in the MVD and thereby fostering disunity among the national groups of the Soviet

Union; he was not a Communist, Khrushchev claimed, but a careerist, and there was no place for him in the Party. When Khrushchev sat down Bulganin, Molotov and several others rose to deliver speeches in a similar vein. Mikoyan was alone in proposing that Beria should not be condemned out of hand, that he was able to draw apposite conclusions from the criticisms of others. As silence fell, Malenkov called on Khrushchev to put the motion. The motion was that Beria be dismissed immediately from all his offices in the Party and the state. Before the meeting could vote Malenkov pressed the bell on his desk. Instantly ten armed soldiers raced into the room, with Zhukov at their head. On Malenkov's order, they seized Beria, placed him under guard and marched him to a room adjoining Malenkov's office.

In order to prevent any attempt to release Beria by the Kremlin guards or MVD troops, Zhukov and General Moskalenko, commander of Moscow Military District, had arranged for the Kantemir and Taman tank divisions to be stationed in the capital, their guns uncovered. Beria was removed from the Kremlin, under armed guard, in a car belonging to one of the Soviet marshals. He was detained in a room in one of the air-raid shelters under Moskalenko's headquarters. It was guarded day and night, both inside and out.

Rumours spread. Some said that Beria had been arrested at his dacha and, moreover, that one of the crack battalions of the Soviet Army had had to take the dacha by storm because MVD officers devoted to Beria had defended it desperately. Others, among them some Western Sovietologists, claimed that Beria had been shot immediately after his arrest. The second tale was as fanciful as the first.

As measures were taken to ensure that civil order was maintained, the members of the Presidium of the Central Committee had re-assembled in the Kremlin. They resolved to convene a plenum of the Committee a day or two later in order to formalize Beria's expulsion from the Party, and they also discussed what should become of him. They were all agreed that he must be executed, but only after preliminary investigation and on the strength of a legal sentence pronounced by a legitimate court. Few of the members of the Presidium trusted the legal network supervised by the office of the Prosecutor-General, however: its principal cadres had been moulded to some extent by Beria himself. Clearly, a new Prosecutor-General had to be appointed. Khrushchev put forward the name of R. A. Rudenko, whom he knew well and who had served for ten years as Prosecutor-General of the Ukraine. He had also been the Soviet Union's chief prosecutor at the Nuremberg Trials of 1945-6 and had a reputation

for integrity and independence of mind. His nomination was accepted, and he was entrusted with the investigation of Beria's crimes.

When Khrushchev, Malenkov, Voroshilov and the others left the Kremlin the plan that they had devised for annihilating Beria and the sources of his power was still being put into operation. Two steps were vital to its success: the neutralization of the MVD troops and the arrest of Beria's allies. The first was accomplished without delay. A battalion of naval frontier guards, which had been summoned hastily to Moscow, was charged with the protection of the Kremlin. The soldiers who had been guarding the members of the Central Committee's Presidium and the Government were instantly replaced, and the MVD buildings were surrounded. The second manoeuvre matched the first in efficiency. Under the direction of I. A. Serov, one of the deputy Ministers of the MVD but not a Beria man, Beria's confederates were searched and arrested, together with dozens of other important officials of the MVD and commanders of MVD divisions. Nearly all capitulated at once; it was rumoured that the few who offered resistance were killed on the spot.

On orders from Moscow almost all the heads of the MVD administrations in the Union Republics were also arrested. The huge operation was carried out with such discretion and dispatch that the citizens of Moscow noticed nothing as Beria's henchmen were picked up at their dachas, in their flats in the city and even in hospital. When the plenum of the Central Committee met at the Kremlin to confirm Beria's expulsion from the Central Committee and from the Party, the Ministry of Internal Affairs had already ceased to be the all-powerful organization that had once subjugated Party and Government. The credit for the success of this difficult and dangerous assignment belonged to Khrushchev, though he had been ably assisted by Bulganin, Malenkov and Zhukov, under whose supervision the Army had played, for the first time, a decisive role in a crisis at the summit of political power.

The new Minister of Internal Affairs was S. N. Kruglov, whom Khrushchev did not completely trust, as he had been a senior MVD official and had served as Minister of Internal Affairs some years earlier, when that Ministry and the Ministry of State Security were separate entities. All his activities were strictly scrutinized by organs of the Party and the Government. Certain other highly placed MVD functionaries, those who had not been directly associated with Beria, were also permitted to remain in their jobs. Only the top echelon of the MVD was purged – the tip of a huge iceberg. For the time being the

immense structure of the MVD and Gulag, with its thousands of camps and millions of prisoners, was left intact. No one was yet prepared to initiate radical changes in that vast organization.

Nevertheless, by the early summer of that year the Soviet press was invoking Stalin's name less and less frequently; when the former leader was mentioned he was no longer the object of extravagant eulogy. *Kommunist* published a number of broadsides against 'the cult of personality' – and although they were supported by quotations not only from the work of Marx and Lenin but also from the writings of Stalin, it was quite clear which cult was implied. A carefully formulated critique of 'the idealistic theory of the cult of personality' was also included in articles published by the Central Committee to mark the fiftieth anniversary of the founding of the Party, which were published in the press at the end of July.

During the course of the year a tiny proportion of the victims of the Stalin terror were rehabilitated very cautiously and selectively. Perhaps the first person to be released and reinstated was Molotov's wife, P. S. Zhemchuzhina, who had been arrested in 1949 on fictitious charges of spying for the USA and for Israel. Posthumous rehabilitation was also accorded to Kaganovich's brother, M. M. Kaganovich, who had been accused of collaborating with Nazi Germany and had chosen to commit suicide rather than wait for the inevitable arrest. Many other Party members, Ministers and top executives succeeded in arranging the release of their relations and close friends. Khrushchev himself organized the reinstatement of his daughter-in-law, who had been arrested soon after the death in the war of Khrushchev's elder son Leonid. By the end of 1953 about a thousand people had been rehabilitated. Because all of them were connected in some way with leading members of the Party and the Government, their accounts of the torture to which they had been subjected during the investigation of their cases and their descriptions of conditions in the prisons and camps served to expedite changes in the attitude of the leadership towards Stalin and the period of his tyranny.

Beria's arrest had marked the end of the first triumvirate. The leadership of the country had passed smoothly to a second, comprising Malenkov, Bulganin and Khrushchev. As head of the Council of Ministers Malenkov was naturally in a position of considerable influence, but the locus of power had shifted in the wake of the dissolution of the formerly omnipotent MVD–MGB leadership, and he now had to account for his actions to the Presidium and Secretariat

of the Party's Central Committee, which had resumed supreme authority. He also suffered from the official investigation of events associated with the trial of Beria, who had no hesitation in smearing Malenkov, whom he had hitherto regarded as a friend. Bulganin's power was more nominal than real. Consequently, the principal member of the second triumvirate, and the most active, was Khrushchev, particularly after September 1953, when he was elected First Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union by a plenum of the Central Committee itself. His election to that post consolidated his position in the Party leadership. From that point on, the Committee maintained firm control over the activities of not only the MVD but all other Soviet institutions as well, including the Council of Ministers; the Central Committee, its Presidium and its Secretariat initiated all reforms and innovations – at least, none had legal force unless approved by the Committee.

A month earlier Khrushchev had been the instigator of one of the reforms announced by Malenkov at a session of the Supreme Soviet. It had been universally approved.

Stalin had worked at night. He never went to bed before 5 a.m. and usually rose at noon. Gradually, all senior state functionaries had adopted the same regime, and meetings of the boards of many People's Commissariats would begin in the small hours. All obkom secretaries spent the night of each working day in their offices as a matter of course, since Stalin regularly telephoned local officials on the spur of the moment rather than travelling about the country or making speeches. Naturally, if a Minister or obkom secretary had to work at night, he rarely appeared in his office before midday, which meant that his subordinates were obliged to remain at their desks until well into the evening. Working hours at many institutions were quite unpredictable.

The Supreme Soviet decreed that from 1 September 1953 this 'harmful' regime was to end. Thenceforth all office workers in all-Union and Republic institutions were to observe a working day that started at 9 a.m. and ended at 6 p.m., with an hour's break for lunch; employees in local institutions were to be at their desks from 10 a.m. until 7 p.m. To ensure compliance with this decree, for several months officials in each Ministry were required to check the offices at the end of the day to make sure that everyone had left. The main entrance would then be locked.

On 17 December 1953 the office of the Prosecutor-General announced that the case against Beria and some of his collaborators

had been prepared. All were accused of having conspired to seize power in the Soviet Union, of having links with foreign intelligence services and of instigating a number of terrorist murders. Their case, the announcement went on, would be heard by a special tribunal established by the Supreme Court of the Soviet Union and in accordance with the law of 1 December 1934, which forbade the representation of the accused in court and any form of appeal and stipulated that sentences were to be executed summarily.¹

The chairman of the special tribunal was Marshal I. S. Konev. Its members included several prominent army officers and state officials, among them N. M. Shvernik, the chairman of the all-Union Central Trade Union Council, General Moskalenko and E. L. Zeyden, the vice-chairman of the Supreme Court of the Soviet Union. The trial lasted six days in all. Its proceedings were never published.

Beria's indictment, though adequate for the purposes of establishing his guilt and justifying his execution, was less than comprehensive. Too many members of the Central Committee's Presidium had a vested interest in the suppression of certain facts for permission to be granted for a protracted and detailed examination of all Beria's crimes. While the tribunal investigated Beria's links with the Musavatists of Azerbaijan and with the Georgian Mensheviks, for example, it did not touch on the issue of the mass extermination of Party and state cadres in Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan that Beria and his men had directed in 1937–8. Reference was made to Beria's debauches during his years in office, but nothing was said about the persecution of minorities in the post-war years – the murder of Jewish writers and artists, the deportation to the east of entire peoples from Caucasia, the Volga region and the Crimea. Only one of Beria's many victims was named: M. S. Kedrov, with whom Beria had had an account to settle and who was shot at the beginning of the war despite the fact that his innocence had been established. The tribunal investigated the various intrigues of which S. Ordzhonikidze was the object and Beria's persecution of his family, but no mention was made of the crimes that had been perpetrated in Leningrad in 1949–50 or the shooting of N. Voznesensky and A. Kuznetsov, both members of the Politburo. Here the tribunal's examination of the facts was constrained by the involvement of Malenkov.

One of the witnesses summoned by the prosecution was A. V. Snegov, the old Bolshevik who in the early 1930s had been engaged in Party work in Transcaucasia and was now serving a long sentence in one of the camps at Kolyma. When he had learned of Beria's arrest

Snegov had managed to arrange for the clandestine delivery of letters to the private Moscow addresses of Mikoyan and Khrushchev, both of whom he had known well at one time. The letters contained details of Beria's crimes that were known to Snegov, who was subsequently requested to give evidence before the tribunal. When he entered the court room Beria exclaimed: 'What, are you still alive?' Snegov retorted, 'Your organization didn't do its job properly.' The tribunal questioned Snegov closely about Beria's past, but he was asked nothing about the monstrous Gulag system, which had not yet been dismantled.

At the start of the trial Beria was confident, almost insolent; when the death sentence was pronounced his defiance evaporated. As he realized that the sentence was to be carried out immediately, he lost control completely. According to Konev, he flung himself about, weeping and begging for mercy. The tribunal dismissed his appeals, and he and his confederates were led from the court room to their deaths.

Press reports of the trial and sentence of Beria and his fellow conspirators were very brief. A more detailed account of the tribunal's proceedings was read only at meetings of town and raion Party organizations. The reaction of the country was less muted, however. The news of Beria's execution prompted a flood of demands for the rehabilitation of prisoners and victims of Stalin's campaigns of terror. Letters were sent to all the highest organs of power both by friends and relations of those who had suffered and by prisoners themselves. These demands could not be ignored, especially those that concerned people who had been victimized by Beria. In particular, the Prosecutor-General was required to investigate the so-called 'Leningrad affair', which had involved the death of Andrei Zhdanov in suspicious circumstances in 1948 and the subsequent disgrace and annihilation of his supporters, and in consequence no fewer than two thousand people were rehabilitated and returned to their own homes. There were many others, sadly, whose rehabilitation was posthumous. The First Secretary of the Leningrad obkom, M. Andrianov, who had been deeply involved in the organization of the 'Leningrad affair', was removed from his post in November 1953. Soon afterwards he was expelled from the Central Committee and threatened with judicial investigation. The ramifications of these events did not stop there: as examination of the 'Leningrad affair' proceeded, it became increasingly difficult to conceal Malenkov's involvement. He too was under threat.

Another event signified the gradual erosion of Stalin's lingering influence. At the end of 1953 the Kremlin, which had been a prohibited

zone under Stalin's dispensation, was opened to the public on Khrushchev's initiative. Formerly, only those with special passes or guests of members of the Government had been allowed to enter it, and then only after their identity had been thoroughly checked. Members of the public were forbidden even to photograph the building. Now the gates were opened wide so that the Soviet people could visit the Kremlin and view its treasures. They had only to buy a ticket; no passes had to be shown. On 31 December a ball for young people was held at the Kremlin. It established a precedent. From then on the New Year's Eve ball and the Christmas trees that were erected at the Kremlin for the children of Moscow were part of a new Muscovite tradition.

On 17 April 1954 Khrushchev was sixty years old. The occasion was marked quite modestly – much more modestly than his fiftieth birthday had been in the Ukraine. Nevertheless, greetings from the Central Committee and other organizations appeared in the press, as did an announcement that the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet had conferred on him the title of Hero of Socialist Labour. Congratulatory telegrams poured in from the leaders of socialist states and from the Communist Parties of many countries.

At the end of that month a session of the Supreme Soviet was convened in Moscow, at which the Soviet Union's budget for the current year was examined and the revised composition of the Government confirmed. Certain important changes were made to the country's administrative structure.

The membership of the Council of Ministers had by then risen to fifty-four, as many of the all-Union Ministries that had been amalgamated in March 1953 had been divided once again into smaller units, among them the Ministry of Internal Affairs. From this Ministry, over which Kruglov still presided, a State Security Committee (KGB) was separated and attached instead to the Council of Ministers. I. A. Serov was appointed to lead it. Serov had served in various organs of the security system for a long time, and Khrushchev knew him well, as he had once been People's Commissar of Internal Affairs in the Ukraine. Like most other high-ranking executives in the security apparatus, Serov had a long record of crime and abuse of power, but he was devoted to Khrushchev and was prepared to act promptly on any order that he received from him. It was to Serov that Khrushchev entrusted the supervision of his own safety; he later wrote: 'I hardly knew Kruglov, but I knew Serov well. I thought and still think him to be an honest

man in his attitude to the Party. And if there is something "on him", as in the case of all Chekists, so to speak, well, he was in that respect a victim of the general policy that Stalin pursued.²

Khrushchev's distrust of Kruglov prompted him to make another appointment. It was characteristic of that transitional period that after he had testified at Beria's trial Snegov should have been returned forthwith, as an ordinary prisoner, to the camp at Kolyma. It was not until some months later that Khrushchev remembered him and, having discovered that he was still in a camp, demanded his immediate rehabilitation. Snegov was not merely rehabilitated: his Party membership was restored to him; the rank of lieutenant-colonel was conferred on him; and he was appointed deputy head of Gulag and a member of the board of the MVD, from which position he could observe Kruglov closely on Khrushchev's behalf.

The reorganization of the Ministry of Internal Affairs and the institution of the KGB were extremely significant. From then on the two organizations were authorized only to undertake investigations – the MVD in criminal cases, the KGB in cases involving state security. The prosecutor's department of the NKVD–MVD was abolished. All prosecutions and all law-enforcement measures were now to be wholly matters for the Prosecutor-General of the Soviet Union and the prosecutors in the Republics, oblasts, towns and raions, who were subordinate to him. In his day Stalin had rendered the Prosecutor-General's office subject to the authority of the organs of the NKVD; now a department was created within the office whose brief was specifically to supervise the activities of the MVD and the KGB. The Prosecutor-General himself was accountable only to the Central Committee of the Communist Party.

The so-called 'Special Boards' were also abolished – those organs that had had the authority, although they were not courts, to pronounce sentence, in the absence of the accused, in the majority of cases that had passed through the system of the NKVD–MGB. Thenceforth no penalty for any offence whatsoever, criminal or political, could be imposed by any body other than an appropriate, legally constituted court.

As a consequence of these reforms, the Soviet legal system was restored to its former supremacy in matters of law. The courts were not fully autonomous, of course, but their rulings were now accorded respect and deference (along with the views of Party authorities), and they were no longer regarded as organs equivalent in importance only to those of the MVD.

The staff of the KGB was considerably reduced. In most organizations and institutions that were unconnected with military affairs and had no access to classified information those 'special' sections and 'first' departments were abolished whose primary function had formerly been to assess the 'reliability' of Soviet citizens. The state security departments at raion level were disbanded. The huge network of informers that the apparatus of state security had once striven to maintain in even the smallest cells of the body politic was dispersed – or at least put into abeyance. Steps were taken towards the reinstatement of certain democratic public bodies. Several defunct organizations were revived, and in Moscow a Second Congress of Soviet Writers was held – the First Congress had been convened twenty years before – at which a new board was elected. Khrushchev's influence was detectable in most of these initiatives.

By the autumn of 1954 Malenkov's position was extremely insecure. First, the Beria affair had severely damaged his reputation, as the two men had been on friendly terms until then – on the very day that he was arrested Beria had written Malenkov a note in which he referred to their friendship and warned him not to trust Khrushchev – and his reputation had also been tarnished by the judicial review of the 'Leningrad affair'. Second, he was being blamed for the grave state of the country's agriculture, which had made little progress by 1954, since during Stalin's last years he had been responsible for agriculture. Third, his cordial relationship with Khrushchev had gradually been eroded by political differences. Malenkov rapidly forfeited the last vestiges of his former influence, and by the end of the year his leadership of the Council of Ministers had become purely nominal.

A session of the Supreme Soviet was convened in February 1955. Among the items on the agenda was the reform of the Supreme Court of the Soviet Union, which, though it elicited little comment from observers at the time, was of the utmost importance. Six men who had seriously compromised themselves during Stalin's rule were removed from the bench. Among them was I. O. Matulevich who, as a member of the Military Collegium of the Supreme Court, had officiated at the trial of Bukharin, Rykov, Krestinsky and others and who had on his conscience the conviction of thousands of innocent people. The record of L. D. Dmitriev was equally discreditable; he was also dismissed. Six new appointments were made.

Significant as the step was, however, it was overshadowed by another. Before the opening of the session the question of Malenkov had been

discussed at a plenum of the Central Committee, at which he himself was present. His relegation had been mooted and supported by almost everyone present, although he had tried to defend himself against the recriminations of the members of the Presidium, including Molotov, who charged him with the neglect of heavy industry. When the Supreme Soviet met Malenkov read out a statement in which he asked to be relieved of his post as Chairman of the Council of Ministers. He acknowledged that he was predominantly responsible for the condition of agriculture in the Soviet Union. His resignation was accepted without hesitation. On a motion put by Khrushchev, Bulganin was confirmed as the new Premier of the Soviet Government. Marshal Zhukov took over the Ministry of Defence from Bulganin. As for Malenkov, he was demoted to Minister of Electric Power Stations and to one of the deputy chairmanships of the Council of Ministers, although he remained a member of the Presidium of the Central Committee.

Nevertheless, collective leadership was not yet merely a formality. A third triumvirate, comprising Khrushchev, Bulganin and Zhukov, took the place of the second. Bulganin's influence was marginal, as ever. Zhukov, on the other hand, was to wield considerable power during the course of the next two years, even though he did not occupy an exalted position in the Party hierarchy; as a candidate for membership of the Central Committee, he was soon to be included among those who attended meetings of the Committee's Presidium. But it was Khrushchev who increasingly dominated the leadership of the Soviet Union.

Sweeping Changes: Foreign and Domestic Policy Reviewed

When Stalin's reign ended, the cold war was at its height. In Korea a bitter war was being waged between American and Chinese forces. France was fighting in Indo-China. The Soviet Union had not yet established diplomatic relations with the Federal Republic of Germany. Her relations with Britain, France and Japan were bad, with the United States even worse, with Yugoslavia overtly hostile. Stalin had maintained a very cautious attitude towards the new China and had acceded only to a limited extent to her requests for economic, technical and cultural aid. With countries such as India, Pakistan, Ceylon, Burma and Indonesia, which had only recently emerged from colonial dependence, relations were superficial and precarious, since Stalin had been inclined to regard the Governments of these states as puppet regimes.

After his death the new leadership of the Soviet Union instituted certain radical changes in the country's foreign policy. At the end of July 1953 an armistice was signed at last between the belligerents in Korea. Soon afterwards protracted and complex negotiations for a ceasefire in Vietnam began, which involved the Soviet Union, the People's Republic of China, the United States, Britain, France, a delegation from the Government of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam and representatives of the leadership of South Vietnam. In 1954, after a number of concessions had been made by both sides, an agreement was signed that imposed a ceasefire and ratified the partition of the country along the 17th parallel. The next year the head of the People's Republic of Vietnam, Ho Chi-minh, was given a ceremonial welcome in Moscow.

Relations with China improved considerably. The Soviet leadership extended large credits to the People's Republic and offered her the technical and cultural aid that she needed in order to realize her first Five-Year Plan. At the end of September 1954, when China was celebrating the fifth anniversary of the People's Republic, a Soviet

delegation flew to Peking, headed by Khrushchev, Bulganin and Mikoyan. It was Khrushchev's first visit to a neighbouring country as head of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and one of his first trips abroad. He had several meetings with Mao Tse-tung and visited a number of Chinese cities. The delegation signed an undertaking that the Soviet garrison at Port Arthur would be withdrawn and that all the equipment of that fortress would be handed over to China. Furthermore, the USSR ceded to China her own share in numerous jointly owned enterprises – concerned with metal and oil extraction, ship building and civil aviation, among other things – and agreed to second to China a large number of Soviet specialists to help with the development of more than 150 major projects, among them the construction of railway lines from Alma-Ata and Ulan-Bator.

Yugoslavia presented the new leadership of the Soviet Union with a more testing problem. At the beginning of 1954 Khrushchev proposed that a commission should be appointed by the Central Committee to examine the causes of, and possible solutions to, the dilemma in which the two states found themselves. Having studied the evidence, the commission, headed by D. Shepilov, came to the conclusion that Yugoslavia was not a 'military-Fascist dictatorship' – the contemptuous characterization adopted universally by the press of all the socialist countries at Stalin's instigation – but a socialist state. Forthwith anti-Yugoslav propaganda ceased, and on 20 October *Pravda* published an article celebrating the tenth anniversary of the liberation of Belgrade that ended with a comment about the 'blood-brotherhood' that united the people of Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union. Just over a month later, on 29 November, almost the entire leadership of the USSR attended a reception held at the Yugoslav Embassy in Moscow to mark Yugoslavia's Independence Day; a Tass communiqué described the atmosphere as 'cordial'. Yet relations remained strained.

At the end of May 1955, in an attempt to normalize relations between the two countries, Khrushchev, Bulganin, Mikoyan and Shepilov flew to Belgrade. According to Western correspondents, hundreds of whom were waiting at the airport, an incident occurred that marred the arrival of the Soviet delegation and indicated Yugoslavia's reluctance to be wooed. Immediately after Marshal Tito had welcomed the visitors the microphone was removed so that Khrushchev was unable publicly to return his host's greeting. Moreover, Tito gave instructions that no translation of Khrushchev's speech was to be published – in it Khrushchev had referred to Beria's role as *provocateur*.

The negotiations did not prove easy for the Soviet delegates. As they were not yet prepared to blame Stalin exclusively for the deterioration in relations between Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union, in the course of the lengthy discussions that took place they were obliged to defend their former leader against the attacks of the Yugoslavs. (Nevertheless, it was during this visit, as he was later to admit, that Khrushchev realized that his position was a false one, that it was clearly going to be impossible to sustain the fiction that Beria and, before him, Yezhov were to blame for all the abuses and atrocities of the Stalin epoch.) The talks did result in the signing of an agreement, however. Each side undertook to ensure that propaganda and 'misinformation' directed at the other were prohibited and that measures would be taken to forge scientific, economic and cultural links between Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union. Soon relations between Yugoslavia and the other socialist countries also returned to normal.

Earlier that month the great powers had opened negotiations over the fate of Austria. Overriding the objections of Molotov, the Presidium of the Central Committee agreed to compromise. On 15 May Austria was declared an independent and permanently neutral country; in July the State Treaty came into force, and the occupying forces departed.

May 1955 also saw the emergence of the Warsaw Pact Organization, after the leaders of all the socialist countries of Europe – with the notable exception of Yugoslavia – had signed a treaty of friendship, co-operation and mutual military aid. The signatories to the Warsaw Pact thus committed themselves to an alliance that counter-balanced NATO and undertook to establish a unified military command for their forces in Europe. A political consultative committee was also set up, in whose work the leaders of the Communist Parties and the Governments of the socialist states were periodically to take part.

In July 1955 approaches that had been made to Western leaders in the spring were formalized at a meeting attended by Khrushchev, Bulganin and Zhukov, representing the Soviet Union; Eisenhower and Dulles from the United States; Eden and Macmillan from Britain; and Faure and Pinay from France. It was the first meeting between the leaders of the four great powers since the Potsdam Conference of 1945. A large number of issues was discussed, but no agreements were signed. A communiqué issued when the talks ended stated that further negotiations would be entrusted to the Foreign Ministers of the four countries. However, the meeting paved the way for progress towards a solution to the German question. Soon afterwards Adenauer, Chancellor

of the Federal Republic of Germany, visited Moscow at the head of a West German delegation. Negotiations between the representatives of the two states were both difficult and acrimonious – as was evident from the speeches that were published in the Soviet press (an innovation promoted by Khrushchev). Nevertheless, a compromise was reached. Diplomatic relations were established between the Federal Republic and the Soviet Union, and later the two countries were to enjoy closer trading links.

In October Moscow welcomed Burma's leader, U Nu. The next month, before paying a return visit to Burma and then proceeding to Afghanistan, Khrushchev and Bulganin flew to India, where they were greeted even more warmly than India's Prime Minister, Jawaharlal Nehru, had been received by the people of the Soviet Union when he had paid the country a state visit the year before. In Delhi, Calcutta, Bombay and many other cities huge crowds gathered to greet the Soviet delegation and to listen to the emotional speeches delivered by Bulganin and Khrushchev. (The speeches were subsequently published.) On one occasion the enthusiasm of the crowd almost precipitated a tragedy, as hundreds of people broke through the police cordon and blocked the road along which Khrushchev's car was slowly moving. When Khrushchev got out of the car to shake hands with those who had surged forward to welcome him, the vehicle was literally taken to pieces, and fragments were passed from hand to hand among the crowd. He and Bulganin were engulfed by the crush of people and had to be rescued by members of the Soviet and Indian secret police forces, who lifted them up bodily over the heads of the crowd. Order was restored with great difficulty. Serov, the Minister in charge of the KGB, recalled later that no job that he had ever tackled had been as difficult or as demanding as the supervision of the Soviet leaders' safety during their visit to India.

Khrushchev's and Bulganin's tour of India received considerable coverage in the world press – as did another event. In December 1955 the Soviet Union exploded her second high-powered thermo-nuclear device, but this time at a great height, which indicated to the rest of the world that she possessed a transportable hydrogen bomb that was more powerful than any device in the arsenal of the United States. Subsequent elections to the Academy of Sciences of the Soviet Union reflected the country's pride in this achievement: physicists and mathematicians comprised the largest group among the new Academicians, who included I. Tamm, B. Khariton and A. D. Sakharov.

Diplomatic initiatives abroad were matched by domestic reform.

After countering Beria's bid for power the leaders of the Party and the Government turned their attention to the country's ailing economy. Agriculture caused them particular concern. It was not merely stagnant; its condition was critical. Official declarations that the grain problem had been solved were mere bluff – the country did not have enough grain. Animal husbandry was also in a lamentable state, worse even than it had been in 1928, before collectivization. There was an acute shortage of almost all consumer goods, and the housing crisis was becoming increasingly severe. In the years between 1940 and 1962 the economy had made some progress – investment in industry had increased threefold despite the devastations of the war – but the manufacture of consumer goods lagged far behind demand, and agricultural production had remained at the level of 1940, although the country's need for foodstuffs and for raw materials for industry had increased considerably. Investigation revealed that under pressure from Stalin the statistical bureaux had systematically exaggerated the figures for agricultural production – on average, by 20 per cent. The official juggling of statistics, however, could no longer disguise the empty shelves in shops and the scarcity of commodities in general.

The first economic reforms, which had already been approved by the Presidium of the Central Committee, were announced at a session of the Supreme Soviet that was convened in August 1953. The reforms had been initiated largely by Khrushchev, who knew far better than the other members of the Presidium the true state of affairs in the countryside and appreciated the urgent need for a number of substantial changes, without which agricultural production would remain static.

The decisions taken by the Supreme Soviet were very modest, but they had a remarkably beneficial effect on the rural areas of the country and ensured Malenkov's enduring popularity among farmers and agricultural workers. First, both capital investment in agriculture and the prices paid by the state for meat, milk, wool, potatoes and vegetables were to rise, as was the price of any grain that was supplied by the collective farms over and above their quotas. Second – and this made the more forceful impression on the villages – Malenkov announced that the Government of the Soviet Union had decided to waive all arrears (that is, debts in respect of tax payments on private plots); that payments in kind by owners of private plots were to be reduced; and that the tax levied on state-owned land that formed part of private plots was to be halved.

A month later a plenum of the Central Committee ratified these measures but was more critical of the state of agriculture and more

radical in the solutions it proposed. In his report Khrushchev identified as the principal barrier to progress the violation of the 'Leninist principle' of permitting collective farmers to have a material interest in the results of their work. This principle, he claimed, had been successfully applied in the case of the production of cotton, tea, citrus fruits and sugar-beet but not in any of the other branches of agriculture. Khrushchev also condemned the harmful practice of demanding more from the advanced collective farms than from other farms in each area, which concealed the inefficiency of the more backward farms. He proposed that the prices paid for potatoes and vegetables should be even higher than those recommended by the Supreme Soviet and repeated his earlier demand for an end to the unjustified strangulation of the collective farmers' efforts with their private plots. Furthermore, he proposed the wholesale reallocation of agricultural specialists, most of whom were working not on collective farms, state farms or machine/tractor stations – the latter came in for some abuse from Khrushchev – but in 'leading institutions' of one kind or another. In the name of the Central Committee, he called for a considerable reduction in the establishments of all these institutions, including that of the Ministry of Agriculture of the Soviet Union.

An important innovation was the suggestion that collective farmers should be paid in advance, both in cash and in kind. Formerly, they had received payment only once a year, in the late autumn. The collective farms were also to be authorized to set aside up to 25 per cent of the cash that they received from the sale of meat and milk for quarterly payments to their members, the only constraint being that these were not to exceed one quarter of the proposed remuneration for each working day. Farms that kept no livestock were to be released from their former obligation to provide the state with meat, and those farms that had acquired livestock only after 15 June 1953 were not required to supply meat during 1953 and 1954.

These reforms had no immediate effect on the economy. Whereas industrial production increased by 12 per cent in 1953, agricultural produce rose by only 2·5 per cent. The shortfall of grain was alarming. As no resources were available for purchasing grain from abroad, the only solution to the problem was somehow to increase yields and to resort to a long-term expedient, the use of chemical fertilizers. Khrushchev saw only one way out of the impasse: he urged that virgin and fallow land be brought under cultivation and recommended the extensive sowing of maize.

Indeed, there were large tracts of land that had never been exploited

in Siberia, northern Kazakhstan, the Urals and northern Caucasasia. Although they lay mainly in the dry zone, preliminary calculations suggested that the advantages to be gained from cultivating them would far outweigh the likely costs. Acquiescence in this proposal of Khrushchev's was by no means universal, however. Among the most strident opponents of the measure were the leaders of the Kazakh Communist Party, First Secretary Shayakhmetov and Second Secretary Afonov, who were well aware that the virgin lands in northern Kazakhstan were used by the Kazakhs as pasture for their herds. Moreover, it was plain that the cultivation of this territory would lead to the settlement in Kazakhstan of immigrants from Russia, the Ukraine and other Republics but certainly not of Kazakhs. Even in the Presidium of the Central Committee cautious objections were voiced by Molotov and by Voroshilov, who had recently visited the Smolensk region and had been astonished by the poverty of the rural areas. 'In a number of raions in Smolensk oblast they are still using cows to pull their ploughs,' he told Khrushchev, who retorted that the state did not have the means to develop both the virgin lands and the long-established areas of arable farming simultaneously. It was essential, he claimed, to concentrate on measures that would yield results most quickly. And in this he had the backing of the majority of the members of the Central Committee's Presidium.

At the beginning of February 1954 hundreds of Komsomol members from Moscow city and oblast assembled in the capital. Both Khrushchev and the Minister of Agriculture, I. A. Benediktov, addressed the gathering and appealed to Komsomols all over the country to take part in the opening up of the virgin and fallow lands. It was natural that their appeal should be directed at young people, as the virgin lands offered few creature comforts, and the first pioneers would inevitably have to live in tents and temporary hutments. There was no time to waste on the construction of elaborate facilities. Even in Kazakhstan, where the local Communist Party held its Seventh Congress that same month, objections to the proposal were overruled. A resolution was passed that confirmed the determination of the Republic's Party organization to assist with the cultivation of the virgin lands. Shayakhmetov and Afonov were dismissed and their places taken by P. K. Ponomarenko and L. I. Brezhnev as First and Second Secretary respectively. By the end of the month trains were carrying hundreds of young people to Siberia and Kazakhstan. Tools and equipment were dispatched direct from factories in other parts of the country.

In March a plenum of the Central Committee met in Moscow to hear and approve a further report by Khrushchev. The Committee resolved that 13 million hectares of new land should be brought under cultivation; their anticipated yield was to be 20 million tonnes of grain in 1955. About 150 state farms were to be established in the virgin lands, and special representatives of the Central Committee, armed with full executive powers, were appointed to supervise groups of four or five of these farms. Two months later another plenum of the Central Committee listened to an urgent appeal from Khrushchev on behalf of the second of his two proposals for the promotion of Soviet agriculture – the extensive cultivation of maize, both for grain and for fodder. One sentence of Khrushchev's that did not appear in his official report reverberated through the chamber: the introduction of maize was to be mandatory, he said, and if necessary he would not shrink from advocating coercive measures similar to those that had been adopted in the eighteenth century to ensure that farmers cultivated potatoes.

Although it was still too early to boast about the progress that had been made under the new dispensation, in the late summer of 1954 a grandiose all-Union Agricultural Exhibition was organized. At the end of July Khrushchev and other leaders inspected the palatial pavilions and installations that had cost hundreds of millions of roubles to construct, and on 1 August the Exhibition was inaugurated as a permanent institution. It must be said in Khrushchev's defence that following the construction of the Exhibition pavilions, the imposing new premises of Moscow University and certain other ambitious projects (projects that had not been initiated by him), he urged all architects and those in charge of construction to set their faces firmly against any kind of costly 'architectural excess'. The principal task of the building industry was now to be the construction of houses. Khrushchev sided firmly with those architects and builders who advocated the earliest possible introduction of standard designs for houses, schools, kindergartens and cinemas and more progressive methods of building; at an all-Union architects' conference held in December 1954 he gave a long and persuasive speech on this topic. The five-storey blocks (without lifts) that soon appeared in large numbers on the outskirts of Moscow did little to enhance the beauty of the capital, it is true; some architects referred to them contemptuously as 'Khrushchoby' (a corruption of *trushchoby*, meaning slums). On the other hand, these monotonous blocks of flats did help to alleviate the acute housing shortage in all the major cities of the USSR.

The harvest of 1954 was better than the previous year's, but overall

there was little room for complacency. While industrial output had increased by 13 per cent, crop yields had risen by no more than 3 per cent. Grain and vegetables were still in desperately short supply. At another Central Committee plenum in January 1955 Khrushchev acknowledged that the objectives of the September 1953 plenum had not been met. He persuaded the members of the Central Committee to agree to higher procurement prices and further investment in agriculture to allow for construction and mechanization. On 3 March *Pravda* announced that Kozlov, the USSR Minister of State Farms, had been dismissed for his 'unsatisfactory work'; Benediktov, the Minister of Agriculture, was appointed in his place, and Matskevich, whom Khrushchev knew well because they had worked together in the Ukraine, succeeded Benediktov at the Agriculture Ministry. One other measure was sanctioned by the Central Committee during the course of the year: the state and collective farms were granted greater autonomy in drawing up and implementing their own production plans. Regrettably, this principle was later violated and, within a few years, almost wholly ignored.

On the whole, 1955 was a good year for agriculture – but the best results were achieved by farms on the old-established arable lands, as the virgin lands were afflicted by severe drought. Khrushchev's enthusiasm for the virgin-lands scheme still ran high, however; he urged thousands more young workers to contribute to the work that had been started, and twelve months later 30 million hectares of new land had been reclaimed.

PART FOUR

From the Twentieth Party Congress
to the June Plenum
1956–1957

Khrushchev's Denunciation of Stalin

As early as June 1955 it was announced publicly that the Twentieth Party Congress would be held on 14 February 1956, and the newspapers published the traditional greeting: 'We hail the Party Congress with fresh achievements of labour.' In January 1956 the publication of the outlines of Bulganin's report on the Party's directives for the sixth Five-Year Plan promoted a discussion in the press about the country's economic problems, and work began on the Central Committee's report on its activities since the previous Congress, which would not only have to reflect the numerous domestic and foreign policy initiatives that had been made since the Nineteenth Congress but would also have to tackle the question of the cult of personality and its consequences, which were causing increasing concern among the Soviet public.

Although the Prosecutor-General's offices had received innumerable applications from prisoners and their relatives, the processing of these was extremely slow, and there were still millions of innocent Soviet citizens in camps and in exile. In 1955 no more than 10,000 people had been released or permitted to return home – mostly Party functionaries of the 1930s. Thousands of others had been rehabilitated posthumously, mainly former members of the Central Committee and prominent writers, scientists and cultural workers.

During 1954–5 trials of Beria's closest accomplices took place throughout the country. The Soviet press published only brief reports of these trials, but as they were held in public, thousands of local Party activists and former political prisoners were able to attend, and they had a considerable effect on public opinion. Several commissions were created, under the auspices of the Central Committee, the Party's Control Committee and the Prosecutor-General's office, to look into some of the atrocities of the Stalin regime. The murder of Kirov and the suicide of Ordzhonikidze were reviewed, as were the show trials of 1936–8. The case of Tukhachevsky and his colleagues, who were shot in 1937, was re-examined. A Central Committee commission led by Pospelov, one of its secretaries, completed a study of the cult of Stalin

and its consequences. Although Pospelov had been one of the authors of a biography of Stalin and among the most active propagandists of his cult, the study made no attempt to evade the issue of Stalin's many abuses of his power.

News of the trials of Beria and his associates, the exposure of the 'doctors' case' and the rehabilitation of some prisoners quickly spread through the camps, inspiring hope and breeding fresh tension. The guards sensed that their licence to treat the remaining prisoners harshly had been revoked, and the camp administration itself was uneasy. The change of atmosphere could not be hidden from the prisoners, and instances of cruelty now provoked mass protests that, in some places, grew into real rebellion. At the Kapitalnaya mine in Norilsk in Siberia, for instance, the prisoners – some of whom had managed to obtain arms – staged a revolt that was suppressed only by armoured troop-carriers. Hundreds of prisoners were killed. Even more serious trouble arose in the camps in Kazakhstan, and a major uprising in Kengir was put down savagely by tank units. It was obvious that the problem of the camps had to be solved as soon as possible, and a few days before the Twentieth Party Congress opened Kruglov was removed from his post and replaced by N. P. Dudorov.

When the Presidium of the Central Committee met to discuss the contents of its report to the Congress, Khrushchev proposed the inclusion of a special section on the cult of personality and its consequences. The proposal was rejected at the insistence of Molotov, Kaganovich, Voroshilov and Malenkov. 'This is not to be a personal report by you but the report of the entire Central Committee,' they said. Khrushchev then proposed that two or three rehabilitated people, selected from among those who had been Party executives in the 1920s and 1930s, should be allowed to speak in the Congress debates. Specifically he suggested A. V. Snegov and O. G. Shatunovskaya, who had held various jobs in the Party apparatus and was now, as a member of the Party's Control Committee, looking into some of the crimes perpetrated under Stalin. This proposal was also rejected by the majority of the Presidium. 'You are proposing that ex-convicts pass judgement on us,' retorted Kaganovich, who had every reason to fear the revelations of such witnesses.

The Twentieth Party Congress opened on 14 February 1956. Although less than four years had passed since the Nineteenth Congress, the many new faces among the delegates reflected substantial changes in the composition of the Party and state leadership, both at the centre and in the localities. Of especial significance to

delegates and observers was the fact that although this was the first Congress since Stalin's death, no procedure for commemorating the 'great father and teacher' had been devised.

At Khrushchev's suggestion, the delegates stood to honour the memory of three 'outstanding members of the Communist movement: Joseph Vissarionovich Stalin, Klement Gottwald and Kyuichi Tokuda', but there were no further tributes to Stalin either in the report or in delegates' speeches.

From the start, the information that was to be gleaned from official reports and speeches and from unofficial conversations in the corridors testified to the Party leadership's achievements. During the period covered by the report industry had developed rapidly, and there had been a notable upswing in the development of agriculture – farm production had risen by 20 per cent between 1952 and 1955, and the income of collective farmers had doubled. House building had increased markedly, and the availability of services had expanded, along with the production of consumer goods. The Soviet Union's international position had been consolidated: her links with the young independent states of Asia and Africa had been considerably strengthened, and relations with the Western capitalist states had improved. The report stressed that consistent pursuit of peaceful coexistence could avoid a third world war. On the subject of the international Communist movement Khrushchev spoke not merely of the possibility but of the necessity of acknowledging different forms of transition from capitalism to socialism: in certain capitalist countries, he claimed, the working class might be able to win a majority in Parliament, which could facilitate the peaceful progress of the socialist revolution. While he mentioned that the Party had brought state security and international affairs under strict control, he said nothing about Stalin: he referred only to the destruction of the 'Beria gang'.

But he had not abandoned the idea of raising in more detail the subject of the Stalin cult and its consequences. A few days after the Congress opened he reconvened the Party's top leaders and stated that at the moment that the Congress had begun its work the authority ceded to all the Party's leading organizations had been revoked; now only the Congress itself had the power to decide important issues. Although he had said nothing about Stalin's crimes in his report on behalf of the Central Committee, no one could prevent his speaking about that matter in his capacity as an ordinary delegate at one of the Congress sessions. If the members of the Presidium still objected, then he could appeal directly to the delegates to hear what he had to say.

This was a challenge to the section of the Presidium that could still be called 'Stalinist', but it was unable to prevent Khrushchev from carrying out his intention. In the wake of negotiations, it was decided that he should submit a report on the personality cult not in his own name but in that of the Central Committee, and not in the course of general debate but at a closed session to be held after the elections to the new Central Committee. There would be no discussion of this second report. Many members of the Presidium feared that if this procedure were not followed, they would never be elected to the Central Committee. Khrushchev agreed to the compromise and began actively to prepare his second report, the delivery of which was to prove the most significant event of the Twentieth Congress – and, perhaps, of his own life.

Before Khrushchev spoke, Miloyan made a brief but quite unambiguous reference to Stalin's abuse of power: 'In the course of nearly twenty years,' he said, 'we had no collective leadership: the cult of personality flourished.' He criticized a number of mistakes made by Stalin in the sphere of foreign policy and said both that the *Short History of the All-Union Communist Party (Bolsheviks)* had given an unsatisfactory account of the Party's history and that Stalin's last work, *Economic Problems of Socialism in the USSR*, contained a number of erroneous propositions. Mikoyan not only spoke warmly about 'Comrades Kosior and Antonov-Ovseyenko', who had been shot at the end of the 1930s, but also stated more generally that numerous Party members of the civil war period had been wrongly declared 'enemies of the people' and 'wreckers'.¹

To judge from the stenographic report of the Congress, published in summer 1956, Khrushchev's report, entitled 'On the Cult of Personality and its Consequences', was delivered at a closed session on the morning of 25 February. Special passes had been printed for this session, and about a hundred former Party activists who had been rehabilitated and released had been invited. Khrushchev checked and confirmed the list himself. The text of the report was not approved in advance by the Presidium, and Khrushchev delivered it in precisely the interval that elapsed between the Congress's election of a new Central Committee and the announcement of its composition. Who, then, helped him to prepare the text? How did this document, which became one of the most important in the history of the world Communist movement, come to see the light?

Khrushchev never wrote out his speeches and reports. He found writing difficult, and spelling mistakes can be found in some of the

resolutions and other documents that he composed. When he had to draft a letter or speech he would summon a stenographer and dictate a rough outline that his assistants edited as necessary. In the case of texts prepared on his behalf by the Central Committee, he would give the officials concerned fairly precise instructions and advice; he would then study the text attentively and make numerous additions to it. However, when he got to the rostrum, he frequently departed from the text and improvised freely, and his improvisations often constituted the most interesting parts of his speeches and reports.

As an experienced agitator and propagandist Khrushchev could easily deliver a long speech without any preparation, and he often did this during his trips abroad. He employed more or less the same technique when he delivered his 'secret' report to the Twentieth Congress. He had at his disposal the detailed material produced by Pospelov's commission and was familiar with the preliminary material of the other commissions set up to look into certain especially scandalous breaches of legality during Stalin's reign. Between 1953 and 1955 he had talked with numerous rehabilitated Party members, in particular those whom he had known before they were arrested and imprisoned. And doubtless his own reminiscences prompted him now to raise issues that he had previously been reluctant to discuss. His report was a combination of all these miscellaneous constituents. It was flawed; it would certainly have benefited from more extensive preparation, but in the circumstances there was nothing more that could have been done. No one but Khrushchev would have made the decision to take such a step at that time: he was the only member of the Party leadership capable of facing the Party Congress with the question of condemning Stalin's crimes and errors. To the delegates and guests most of what they heard that day in the Great Hall of the Kremlin was a revelation indeed.

They listened in shocked silence, only occasionally interrupting the speaker with exclamations of amazement and indignation. Khrushchev spoke of the illegal mass repressions sanctioned by Stalin; of the cruel tortures to which many prisoners, even members of the Politburo, had been subjected; of the letters they had written and statements they had made before they died. He told of the conflict between Lenin and Stalin in the last months of Lenin's life and of Lenin's proposal that Stalin be removed from the post of General Secretary of the Party. He mentioned the dubious circumstances surrounding the murder of Kirov in 1934 and hinted broadly at the possible involvement of Stalin. He spoke of Stalin's confusion in the early days of the Second World

War and his desertion of his post at that time. It was at Stalin's door that he laid the lion's share of the blame for the severe defeats of the Red Army at the start of the war and for the occupation of huge tracts of Soviet territory.

According to Khrushchev, Stalin was the initiator of the mass repressions of the post-war period. He had destroyed over two-thirds of the members of the Central Committee elected at the Party's Seventeenth Congress in 1934 and in his last years was preparing for a fresh series of repressive measures, having already practically excluded Molotov, Mikoyan, Kaganovich and Voroshilov from participation in the leadership. Khrushchev declared Stalin to be principally responsible for the deplorable state of Soviet agriculture and for many gross mistakes in his direction of the Soviet Union's foreign policy. He told of how Stalin had encouraged the flowering of the cult of his own personality, falsified the Party's history and even amended his own biography to reveal himself in a better light.

As had been agreed, there was no debate on Khrushchev's report. In the resolution of the Twentieth Congress published some months later the Congress approved the report and authorized the Central Committee 'to carry out consistently measures for removing wholly and entirely the cult of the individual, foreign to Marxism-Leninism, for removing its consequences in every aspect of party, governmental and ideological activity. . . .'²

Khrushchev's report did not remain secret. Indeed, it may be supposed that he himself made no attempt to keep it secret. Stalin once said that a Party secret could be kept only within the Politburo: that to bring up a secret matter even at a plenum of the Central Committee was tantamount to 'proclaiming it in the streets'. And Khrushchev had delivered his report not at a plenum but at a Party Congress, before 1,500 delegates from all over the country and dozens of visitors. It is hardly surprising, therefore, that the main points of the report were known abroad the very next day and published in the non-Communist press. Few believed Khrushchev's none too firm denial, especially when, a few weeks later, the United States State Department circulated the full text of the report in English.

The world, and particularly the international Communist movement, reeled under the impact of the report – although critical voices were raised. But it should be recorded that the many reproaches levelled at Khrushchev – for the shallowness of his report, its failure to provide any theoretical or historical analysis of the circumstances that gave rise to the Stalin cult and made the mass terror possible, the

confinement of its criticism of Stalin to the period 1934–53, its failure to deal with the criminal activity of many of Stalin's closest aides and much else – were not entirely justified. The situation that obtained in the Central Committee and in the international Communist movement at the beginning of 1956 was such that Khrushchev simply could not have undertaken any protracted scientific investigation or detailed substantiation and discussion of the points that he raised. Any international conference of Communist Parties in which such people as Mao Tse-tung, Enver Hoxha, Matyas Rákosi, Vylko Chervenkov, Boleslaw Bierut, Maurice Thorez and others participated would have objected violently to a wholesale exposure of Stalin. In preparing his report Khrushchev had had to hide what he was going to do from Molotov, Malenkov, Voroshilov and Kaganovich; nor had he been able to trust many officials of the investigatory branches of the Central Committee. In these circumstances he had taken an immense personal risk – no less than when he had orchestrated the arrest of Beria and his men. He had had to act quickly, resolutely and independently, relying exclusively on the support of the people whom he most trusted.

There was a further risk: he and many of his aides were not entirely blameless; they also shared responsibility for the crimes of the Stalin epoch, even if their share was probably much smaller than that of other members of the Party leadership. Might not the exposure of Stalin turn against them? When Voroshilov learned of Khrushchev's intention to make his secret speech, he exclaimed: 'But what will happen to us?' That question must also have exercised Khrushchev.

In foreign Communist Parties and among Sovietologists of all types argument continues about the motives that prompted Khrushchev's decision to overturn the cult that had become so firmly established in the country and the Party. It is a complex question, one that even Khrushchev himself might have found impossible to answer. Several hypotheses have been advanced.

First, it has often been suggested that he denounced the most glaring of Stalin's crimes (but by no means all) mainly in order to rationalize the system of bureaucratic government and even to consolidate the privileges and power of members of the *nomenklatura*. So, it is mooted, he exposed primarily the repressive measures that were directed against the Party cadres. Nothing was said about the lawless repressions carried out in the 1920s and at the beginning of the 1930s; nor was the question raised of rehabilitating those Communists who had joined various opposition groups in the 1920s and who, at the beginning of the mass terror, were almost all destroyed on Stalin's

orders. Khrushchev's intention was to relieve the higher strata of the bureaucracy of the fear of repression and thereby to perfect the totalitarian system. It was no secret that in the 1940s even outright careerists were sometimes afraid of promotion to the highest positions in the state; proximity to Stalin was dangerous.

Nobody was safe from the terror of Stalin's time, and it was precisely the top circles of the Party and state apparatus that suffered especially savage purges throughout that period. The obkom secretaries, the Ministers, the generals and the marshals of the 1940s, even when they were wholly indebted to Stalin for their advancement, grew weary of the constant fear of repression, of Stalin's morbid suspicions, of dreary nocturnal vigils broken only by calls from Stalin, who was almost always displeased about something. Many of these 'soldiers of Stalin' also tired of the need to resort constantly to coercion and threats in their oblasts and departments in order to fulfil over-ambitious procurement plans for farm produce or to carry out some new witch-hunt. Their disenchantment undoubtedly helped Khrushchev to overthrow the Stalin cult and secured for him, initially, the support of the bulk of the Party cadres. However, although the higher bureaucrats wanted to see the end of the excesses of the Stalin regime, they were not interested in thoroughgoing exposure of that regime, since that might ultimately undermine their own power and prestige. In addition, at the higher and middle levels of Party and state there were few who had not been concerned, directly or indirectly, with many of the atrocities of past years. They feared being called to account for what they had done, and although Khrushchev's report was full of reservations, it seemed to many of them an extremely risky step.

Second, the view is often taken that Khrushchev's speech was a decisive episode in a struggle for power at the summit of the Party and the state. By taking the initiative in exposing Stalin's crimes, Khrushchev struck a blow at such close colleagues of Stalin as Molotov, Kaganovich, Malenkov, Voroshilov and Mikoyan, who might have considered that they were more suitable than he, both politically and morally, to succeed to the power of the late despot. Although Khrushchev had not named any of those members of the Presidium in his speech, everyone knew how close they had all been to Stalin in the 1930s and 1940s and so could not have failed to be involved in his crimes. Khrushchev cut the ground from under the feet of these 'chiefs' of yesterday, leaving them with a simple choice: either to bow to his authority or to be cast out from the positions of power to which they had become so accustomed. Clearly, there is some cogency to this view.

A third theory postulates that more personal considerations motivated Khrushchev. Solzhenitsyn was unquestionably right when he wrote that a miracle such as the dissolution of the camps and the liberation of millions of prisoners was to a great extent the result not of political calculation but of a 'movement of the heart' on the part of Khrushchev, who had retained, even in the stifling atmosphere of the Stalin period, the capacity to do good and to repent.

To a greater degree than any other member of Stalin's Presidium, he had maintained his links with the workers and with the villages. The difficulties facing the workers, and especially the peasants, genuinely distressed him. With him, old loyalties died hard – and this fact, perhaps, lay at the heart of his decision to eradicate Stalin's malign influence, for his actions during the first years of his leadership must have been determined to some extent by his experiences as a Party official and professional revolutionary in the 1920s, which he never forgot.

The top echelon of the Party, those who had led the revolution, lacked cohesion: that generation was unable to rid itself of the consequences of the acute factional conflicts of the pre-revolutionary years, émigré squabbles, theoretical differences and conflicts arising from personal ambition. Lenin had been the generally recognized authority and leader of the Party; after his death a struggle in the Party's higher strata had been almost inevitable. Its echoes still lingered. The second generation of Party leaders, on the other hand, those who had emerged during the revolution, the civil war, the devastation and the difficult years of the New Economic Policy, were more united though less well educated theoretically. Working locally within an anarchic or hostile international encirclement, these men generally had complete confidence in one another and a special friendship akin to that of soldiers welded together by common interests. To that generation belonged such men as Kirov, Ordzhonikidze, Kosior, Chubar and others, who had been about 30 years old at the beginning of the revolution; younger officials such as Khrushchev, who had been between 23 and 25 at that time; and even younger revolutionaries like A. Kosarev or Nikolai Ostrovsky. Stalin's apparent simplicity, even his rough manner, made a better impression on this middle level of the Party than did the refined cultivation and hauteur of Trotsky or the learned dogmatism and intellectual irresolution of Kamenev and Zinoviev. The backing of these younger men did more than any theoretical differences to ensure Stalin's triumph over the 'Left' opposition.

This second echelon of revolutionary leaders consisted mainly not of theoreticians but of men of action – though not all of their actions

merit approval. They were distinguished by their straightforward attitudes, their readiness for sacrifice and risk, their discipline. In the 1920s Stalin had tried to undermine the solidarity of this stratum, but with only partial success. After the Seventeenth Party Congress in 1934 it was these men who formed the majority in the Central Committee and headed nearly all the Party's obkoms: yet it was these men, who had remained loyal to Stalin, who were almost all annihilated in the terror of 1937–8. Khrushchev escaped, having craftily learned the rules of Stalin's game, but he never became a genuine Stalinist. In the depths of his heart he always doubted the guilt of his old friends and comrades, and he could not reconcile himself to their fate, even though it had offered him the chance of speedier promotion.

Once he had become head of the Secretariat of the Central Committee and had smashed the Beria group in alliance with Malenkov, Bulganin and Zhukov, Khrushchev applied himself to restoring the good names of his colleagues. He reinstated the family of his friend in the Moscow gorkom, S. Z. Korytny, and those members of the families of Kosior, Kosarev and others who were still alive. Much of what he heard from them – which came as a revelation to him – aroused his bitterness and anger. And this was perhaps the primary motive force behind the persistence with which he pushed through his report to the Twentieth Congress.

It is foolish to criticize the report for its lack of theoretical profundity. Khrushchev did what he could. His exposure of Stalin's crimes, even if not of all of them, was a personal mission, a service performed by him as an individual. It remains the principal feat of his life, overshadowing all his mistakes, both before and after. He occupies a prominent place in history above all because of the report that he delivered at Twentieth Congress, and this fact is not obscured by the suppression of his name and his achievements that has persisted in the Soviet press for more than seventeen years.

Rumours that Khrushchev had presented a lengthy secret report about Stalin's crimes and errors to the Twentieth Congress spread quickly across the country, especially among Party circles. They circulated extensively in Georgia, the homeland of the late leader and of Beria, where students, older schoolchildren and certain teachers decided to commemorate the third anniversary of Stalin's death, which in Moscow was not marked by as much as a brief note in the central press. An enormous meeting was held at Stalin's monument in Tbilisi. Although some people guessed that the young people had been primed by more mature organizers, the demonstration appeared to be fairly

spontaneous. It soon spread to the central street and square of the city, and attempts by Party and Komsomol leaders to calm the demonstrators met with no success. Troops were summoned; hundreds died; and a visit to Georgia that Khrushchev had arranged for the following year was cancelled.

It was perhaps this dramatic episode that prompted the Central Committee's decision partially to declassify Khrushchev's report; the text, printed at a special press, was circulated to all the Party's raikoms and gorkoms. Within a month of the opening of the Twentieth Congress tens of thousands of meetings were held all over the country, to which both Party members and non-Party people were invited. Representatives of the gorkoms and raikoms read out Khrushchev's report in its entirety. There was no discussion of it, and the committee representatives answered no questions, for they did not know how to. The meetings were generally adjourned immediately after the report had been read. To most people the content of Khrushchev's report was a revelation, a shock intensified by the fact that the Party was appealing to the people, so to speak, asking for their help in eradicating the Stalin cult and in creating conditions that would render the revival of such tyranny inconceivable.

It would be wrong to claim that the exposure of the monstrous crimes of the Stalin epoch strengthened the authority of the Party and assisted the development of the world Communist movement. In fact, the Twentieth Congress dealt a grave blow both to Stalin's prestige and to that of the entire leadership of the Party and exposed the whole Communist movement to a severe ordeal. In the West many left the Party, asking themselves, 'How could this have happened?' They were offered no plausible answer. It was known that the bourgeois and Social Democratic press had long been writing about the Bolsheviks' 'misdeeds', about mass terror, about hundreds of concentration camps in the north and east of the Soviet Union and about Stalin's annihilation of his political opponents. But Communists and many Western liberals had usually rejected these allegations as deliberate lies and slanders. Then suddenly from Moscow, from a Party Congress, had come the news that many of the reports in the bourgeois and émigré papers were true. Furthermore, Khrushchev had cited some facts of which even the enemies of the Soviet Union had only a very vague notion. In the face of this crisis even committed Communists frequently wondered whether it had really been necessary to speak so frankly, before the whole world, before the foes of Communism, about Stalin's crimes, which cast a shadow over the entire Communist

movement. But there was no doubt about this, either in 1956 or later: the truth about the crimes of earlier years had to be revealed to the Party and to the people. The crisis was the reckoning to be paid for the past, which could not have been kept hidden for ever: sooner or later it would have been revealed to the world in one way or another.

Equally, the crisis could be overcome step by step – by a radical change in the whole atmosphere in the Party, the introduction of new and genuinely democratic forms of leadership and the honest and sincere pursuit of the line of the Twentieth Congress. Unfortunately, the politics of the country and the Party developed differently; subsequent events did not restore the public life of the Soviet Union to health or overcome the crisis in the world Communist movement.

Inconsistency in Party policy was linked, in the first place, with the sharpening of the conflict within the Central Committee and especially within the Presidium. As a result of the Twentieth Congress, the composition of the Central Committee altered considerably. Of the 125 members who had been elected at the Nineteenth Congress, only seventy-nine became members of the new body. Moreover, the Committee was enlarged, and the addition of fifty-four members substantially enhanced the position and influence of Khrushchev. The composition of the Presidium changed less radically. Only two new members joined: A. L. Kirichenko and M. A. Suslov. All the other members of the Presidium, including Molotov, Malenkov, Voroshilov and Kaganovich, Mikoyan, Saburov and Pervukhin, were re-elected. Among the candidates for membership were L. I. Brezhnev, G. K. Zhukov, E. A. Furtseva, N. M. Shvernik and D. T. Shepilov – all active supporters of Khrushchev's political line and leadership.

While at the Party Congress and at the first meetings and assemblies of activists that followed, it had been possible to avoid discussion of Khrushchev's report and the problems of the cult of personality, at subsequent meetings these questions were raised more and more frequently. Naturally, the issue of the responsibility borne by the whole Party leadership in the Stalin period was aired. At a meeting of the Party group of the Union of Soviet Writers that was held in March 1956 to discuss the outcome of the Twentieth Congress, many of the writers not only spoke about the difficulties under which literature was labouring, the repressions carried out among writers and the distortion of reality in the literary works produced in Stalin's time but also sought the punishment of informers and slanderers and resolutely condemned all who had been involved. Many writers demanded the

extension of socialist democracy. The 70-year-old writer P. A. Blyakhin, who had joined the Party in 1903, said at this meeting:

Lenin dreamed of creating a socialist apparatus – socialist not just in words but in deeds. How has Lenin's behest been fulfilled? . . . I don't agree with Mikoyan. No, Leninist standards and Leninist principles have not yet been restored. It won't do to take wishes for reality. . . . Instead of a socialist apparatus, what has been created and fostered is a bureaucratic apparatus based upon red tape, unthinking conformity, careerism and the striving for a cushy number. It is an apparatus that has lost all sense of responsibility. Stalin took the place of the Tsar, and he relied on this apparatus. A disparity in material standards of living came about that is unacceptable in Soviet society. . . . The Stalin epoch struck at the foundations of the constitution, the fraternity between peoples and socialist legality. The Kalmucks [one of the ethnic groups deported eastward in 1944] have already been mentioned here. But what is to be said about the sufferings of the Jewish people? The Beylis case shamed the Tsarist autocracy before the whole world: the shameful 'doctors' case' is a brand of shame on the Party and, above all, on us, the Russian Communists. . . . There are people who are surreptitiously hindering all changes, including rehabilitation. Only seven or eight thousand people have been rehabilitated. What Khrushchev said at the Congress about the number of prisoners made a painful impression. How many innocent people are still languishing in prison? A number of measures need to be taken in order to effect mass rehabilitations. The only guarantee against a repetition of what happened under Stalin is Leninist democracy in the Party and the soviets.

And E. Yu. Maltsev said:

The cadres, from top to bottom, have been trained in the former style of leadership. In Ryazan oblast a collective farm chairman is all-powerful, just as before, and the secretary of the raikom bangs his fist on the table just as he used to. At the Party Congress too many behaved in a cowardly fashion. . . . There's no need to look for bourgeois ideology where it doesn't exist. The Central Committee ought instead to look into all the abuses committed by responsible Party workers. . . . As a writer, I want to find out what the basis was on which the cult of personality could arise, what social causes engendered it. One can't explain everything by reference to Stalin's personal characteristics. . . .³

When he spoke at meetings of active Party members after the Twentieth Congress Khrushchev was not ashamed to admit that he had seen and known about a great many of the crimes committed under Stalin but had been afraid to protest. At one of these meetings

he was handed a note, which read: 'How could you, members of the Politburo, allow such grave crimes to be committed in our country?' Khrushchev read out the note and then said in a loud voice: 'The note is not signed. Stand up, the person who wrote it!' Nobody stood up. Khrushchev repeated his request, but the writer of the note still did not stand up. 'The person who wrote this note is frightened,' said Khrushchev. 'Well, we were frightened to stand up against Stalin.' This was not a complete answer, of course, but it was an honest one.

Things were harder, though, for Molotov, Kaganovich, Malenkov and Voroshilov, for they had not merely been afraid of Stalin – they had actively participated in nearly all his crimes. And that was no secret to many members of the Party. In April and May 1956 a number of attempts to push criticism of the Stalin cult further were cut short abruptly. One old Bolshevik who made a speech about Stalin's crimes at a Party conference at Leningrad University was expelled from the Party a few days later. A teacher of Marxism who tried in one of his lectures to touch upon the causes that had given rise to the personality cult was summoned to the Party gorkom and severely reprimanded. A long article from the Chinese newspaper *Renminribao* was reproduced in *Pravda* under the title 'On the Historical Experience of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat'. Its author attempted to show that Stalin's achievements were much greater than his 'mistakes' and that many of his 'mistakes' might even have been useful, since they enriched the historical experience of the dictatorship of the proletariat. In Party circles it was said that the article had been written by Mao Tse-tung himself.

On 30 June 1956 the Central Committee adopted a special resolution, 'On overcoming the cult of personality and its consequences', which was published in all the newspapers. Both in content and in form, it represented a marked step backwards by comparison with Khrushchev's report to the Twentieth Congress. And within a few months Khrushchev himself felt obliged to declare in a number of speeches that Stalin 'was a great Marxist–Leninist' and 'a great revolutionary' and that the Party 'would not allow Stalin's name to be surrendered to the enemies of Communism'. He also sharply condemned the concept of 'Stalinism', which he alleged to be an invention of anti-Soviet propaganda.

No one was able to stem the movement begun by the Twentieth Congress, however. During the spring and summer of 1956 events took place that were in every respect much more important than any ideological vacillations. The most important of these was the mass

liberation of almost all political prisoners and the rapid review of the cases of those who had died between 1935 and 1955 in Stalin's camps and prisons and their rehabilitation.

On Khrushchev's initiative, about seventy special commissions were set up in the camps themselves to examine the cases of the prisoners. Soon over twenty more commissions set out from Moscow to look into the cases of those former prisoners who were living in exile or in 'permanent settlement'. Generally, each commission included an official from the Prosecutor-General's office, a representative of the Central Committee and a Party member who had already been rehabilitated; each was endowed with the powers of the Presidium and could propose rehabilitation, pardon or a reduction in the length of a sentence in the name of the Supreme Soviet. The decisions taken by these commissions did not as a rule require confirmation but came into force immediately. Even before the commissions set to work, those who had been imprisoned for having insulted or criticized Stalin were rehabilitated and released on instructions from Moscow.

The commissions worked quickly. Usually all that was necessary was a short interview with the prisoner himself and a brief review of his dossier. By the summer of 1956 several millions of prisoners had been restored to their homes. The first to be released were Party members, members of the families of Communists who had been shot or had died in captivity and prisoners who had long since completed their sentences but had been held in the camps or whose sentences and terms of exile had been illegally extended for an indefinite period, even in perpetuity. In the more complicated cases prisoners were released without having been rehabilitated – having already served their time, they were urged to seek rehabilitation later. All non-Party members who had been condemned on false charges of 'anti-Soviet activity' were freed, as were the few surviving members of the Menshevik, Socialist Revolutionary and Anarchist parties, who had in many cases spent twenty-five or thirty years in captivity, and all ex-prisoners of war and 'displaced persons' who had not disgraced themselves by collaboration with the enemy.

The return from the camps of millions of former prisoners, together with the posthumous rehabilitation of millions of victims of Stalin's terror, was as important to the health of the nation as the Twentieth Party Congress itself. Khrushchev required all Party and soviet organizations to treat those who had been rehabilitated with the greatest care. Where necessary, they were to be accorded priority in their search for accommodation and employment, and suitable

arrangements were to be made for pensions. One example of Khrushchev's genuine concern was the case of three women who were not related but had spent seventeen years in the same camp, sleeping in the same bunks and working side by side. They wanted a flat in Moscow with three rooms, one for each of them, so that they would not be separated after their rehabilitation. But only one of these women had been arrested in Moscow and had the right to a permit to reside in the capital. They appealed to Khrushchev, who personally wrote out an authorization for their request to be granted. (When one of the three friends died, fifteen years later, the survivors wrote again to the district soviet with a further request concerning their accommodation. It was rejected. The two women were told: 'The fashion for rehabilitated people is now dead.')

The work of the rehabilitation commissions, both at the centre and in the localities, had its shortcomings.

The rehabilitation of prisoners who had been shot or had died in prison – and there were many more of those than survivors – was carried out, as a rule, only if relatives or friends made application. If nobody applied, a case would not be reviewed. If review and rehabilitation did take place (for example, when a group of people was involved), nobody undertook to find the relatives or children of the deceased to tell them of the rehabilitation and to offer them some compensation for the confiscation of their possessions, for their eviction from their flats and for the ruin of their lives. The majority of participants in the opposition tendencies of the 1920s were not rehabilitated – yet all these people had been imprisoned or destroyed despite their being guiltless of any crime. Furthermore, there was no formal review of the political trials of 1928–31 and 1936–8, and neither the rehabilitation commissions nor the Prosecutor-General's Office or Party branches called to account the NKVD investigators who had been guilty of torturing people. They did not punish the heads of prisons and camps who had become notorious for their cruel treatment of prisoners, and they neither published the names of informers and slanderers nor imposed on them any penalties. Only in some rare and well publicized cases were a few responsible officials of the NKVD–MGB reprimanded for 'exceeding their powers', for 'using unacceptable methods of investigation' and for 'making unfounded accusations'.

When the mass return of the former prisoners began many informers and investigators were seized by panic, but their alarm soon subsided. Most of the people they had once tortured and condemned had long

since been buried in huge 'brotherhood graves' with wooden identity tags tied to their feet. Besides, most of those who did return experienced not so much anger or desire for revenge as fear. They were afraid to talk frankly with their friends and relatives about the suffering they had endured, about the dreadful Gulag empire and about the tortures inflicted on them. Many of them thought they were being followed, that their telephone conversations were being tapped and that they were surrounded by informers. Those who shook off this paranoia most quickly were the ones who had been arrested between 1946 and 1952 and had spent a mere five to ten years in captivity under the more 'liberal' Gulag regime of the post-war years. By and large, they resumed their former occupations quite soon after their release. Most of those who had spent between seventeen and twenty years in captivity were psychologically broken, however, and quite unwilling to engage in any political activity.

Those ex-prisoners who resumed their posts in the Party and state apparatus can be counted on the fingers of one hand. Only a few tried to fight to re-establish historical truth and to ensure that those who had played an active part in the purges were punished. The philosopher P.I. Shabalkin spent several years demanding that those who had defamed him and a group of other Soviet philosophers in 1936-7 be called to account by the Party, but at the end of the 1950s they were still occupying responsible posts in scientific institutions and in the Party's ideological apparatus. A number of statements were submitted concerning the crimes of Sverdlov's younger son, A. Ya. Sverdlov, who had been an NKVD investigator over a long period and had personally tortured many prisoners. In 1956 he held a post at the Institute of Marxism-Leninism. The statements were never examined, and Sverdlov got off with nothing worse than a little fright. When General A. I. Todorsky returned from captivity he devoted a great deal of time and effort to rectifying the falsification of the history of the civil war and fighting for the restoration of the good names of prominent Army leaders, many of whom had not been rehabilitated. But most such attempts came up against the resistance of the Party apparatus, which hid behind Khrushchev's own words: 'We must not carry out a St Bartholomew's Eve massacre.' When Khrushchev was once asked to explain this remark, he replied with candour that if all those who had participated in Stalin's crimes directly or indirectly were to be brought to book, more people would have to be imprisoned than had been rehabilitated and released. An anonymous poet has put the point justly and succinctly:

Without mourning flags on the state's towers,
Without funeral speeches and candles,
Russia forgave the innocent who had been punished,
And also forgave their executioners.

The repercussions of the Twentieth Congress were not exclusively political, however. The years 1953 and 1954 had seen some slight quickening of the cultural life of the Soviet Union. A. T. Tvardovsky had written the first version of his poem 'Tyorkin in the Other World', which became known through the circulation of manuscript copies; the journal *Novy Mir* had published some provocative critical articles; V. Pomerantsev's article 'On Sincerity in Literature' had provoked an enthusiastic public response; F. Abramov's sketch 'People of a Collective Farm Village' had attracted considerable attention; Ilya Ehrenburg's novella *The Thaw* had made its appearance, and its title became a by-word. The conservative circles of the Party took fright at even these timid attempts by the creative intelligentsia to declare its independence. At the insistence of the Secretary of the Central Committee, Pospelov, Tvardovsky was removed from the post of editor-in-chief of *Novy Mir* and replaced by K. M. Simonov, but at the very meeting at which this decision was made Khrushchev said: 'We ourselves are to blame for the vacillations of the intelligentsia. Dozens of questions related to the cult of personality have arisen in people's minds, and we have not provided them with answers.'

The cultural thaw persisted during the following years. A profound impression was made by a play by Nazim Hikmet, a Turkish poet who had emigrated to the Soviet Union, entitled *But Did Ivan Ivanovich Exist?*, but the most striking product of those years was V. Dudintsev's novel *Not By Bread Alone*, which was published in *Novy Mir* in 1956 and discussed at hundreds of meetings. A number of interesting works were published in an almanac produced by a group of writers under the title *Literary Moscow*. Other works published at this time that elicited an eager response were A. Yashin's *Levers*, D. Granin's *Private Opinion*, G. Troyepolsky's *Candidate of Sciences*,⁴ V. Ovechkin's *A Difficult Spring*, Galina Nikolayeva's *The Battle on the Way*, V. Soloukhin's *Vladimir Roads*, P. Nilin's *Cruelty*, and V. F. Tendryakov's stories entitled *Potholes* and *Not Wanted*.⁵ Bruno Jasienski's novel *Conspiracy of the Indifferent* was also published (he was a writer who had perished under Stalin), as were some of the works of I. Babel and of other writers who had perished in the 1930s, and for the first time, after many years of suppression, John Reed's

book *Ten Days that Shook the World* was reprinted.

A remarkable recrudescence of poetry was evident in the mid-1950s. Its social significance increased sharply, and a whole pleiad of vigorous young poets appeared – Voznesensky, Okudzhava, Yevtushenko, Akhmadullina, Slutsky, Levitansky, Rozhdestvensky and others. Zabolotsky, who had been imprisoned for many years, returned to work. Recalling those times in his autobiography, Yevtushenko wrote:

Poetry Day, which was later to become a national institution, was held for the first time in 1955. On that day poets stood behind the counters in all the Moscow bookshops, read their poems and signed copies of their books. Several of us read our poems in Mokhovskaya Street, not far from the University. . . . we were literally carried out of the shop. . . . I read the poem that the poet K. had said was written for our enemies. But the young people who heard it took it not as an attack upon our country but as a weapon in the struggle against those who were holding her back from building her future. And thousands of hands, raised in applause, voted for that struggle. . . . The press, radio and television were quite obviously failing to keep up with the rapid changes in the life of the country. . . . Literary criticism was lagging hopelessly behind events. Fiction was on the move, but slowly. But poetry was mobile. . . . I chose the rostrum as my battleground. I read poetry in factories, colleges, research institutes, in office buildings and in schools. The audiences numbered between twenty and a thousand. . . . In 1963 [poetry readings drew] 14,000 people to the Sports Palace.⁶

Khrushchev was not yet ready to lend his active support to the thaw. The journal *Kommunist* published a lengthy article by him entitled 'For a Close Link between Literature and Art and the Life of the People'.⁷ A footnote stated that the article was a generalized exposition of what Khrushchev had said in the course of meetings he had had with writers and artists in May, June and July 1957. These meetings had actually taken place at Khrushchev's state dacha, and they can hardly be said to have promoted a spirit of mutual understanding as far as the most progressive section of the Soviet cultural intelligentsia was concerned. In any case, the article was full of clichés and dogmatic demands and opened up no new horizons for Soviet culture. He severely and unjustly criticized Dudintsev, describing his novel as a 'distorting mirror', and he also denounced *Literary Moscow*, the publication of which was banned. Everyone knew how roughly he had dealt with Margarita Aliger, who had tried to defend the almanac. Nevertheless, Khrushchev's bigoted assertions did not jeopardize his

popularity among artists and writers, to which both the Twentieth Party Congress and, later, the June plenum of 1957 contributed. Some years later even Anna Akhmatova was to say: 'I am a Khrushchevite because Khrushchev did for me the noblest thing that one human being can do for another: he gave me back my son.'⁸

Some tentative attempts by the journal *Voprosy Istorii* (*Problems of History*) to take a fresh look at certain problems of the history of the Soviet Union and, in particular, to criticize some aspects of Stalin's activity in 1917 provoked a special resolution of the Central Committee, which denounced the journal's 'objectivist' attitude and the 'slackening of its fight against bourgeois ideology'. Almost the entire editorial board was replaced. All the same, it was now impossible to return to the old regime where cultural matters were concerned. Although K. M. Simonov was removed from the editorship of *Novy Mir*, Tvardovsky, who was reappointed to the post, made no changes in the policy of the journal. The newspaper *Komsomolskaya Pravda*, edited by A. T. Adzhubei, Khrushchev's son-in-law, became lively and interesting; subsequently he was made editor-in-chief of *Izvestiya*.

The country's cultural life was also influenced by the appearance of a number of new journals. Khrushchev himself encouraged the publication of one journal, *Za Rubezhom* (*Abroad*). He was kept regularly informed by Tass, and he wished the Soviet public to be able to read, in Russian translation, the most interesting articles that had appeared in the foreign press. Other periodicals, concerned with every aspect of Soviet life, lined the bookstalls;⁹ by 1958 twice as many journals were appearing regularly as had been published in 1950.

Painting, sculpture, the theatre and the academic world were also shaking off some of the old shackles. Among the social sciences the change affected economics particularly, and a number of productive discussions took place among economists. In 1956 the statistical annual *Narodnoye Khozyaistvo SSSR* (*The Economy of the USSR*) resumed publication, together with collections of statistics associated with industry, trade, culture and so on. An official decision was taken to publish the complete collected works of Lenin. The stenographic reports of the proceedings of the Party's Congresses and conferences also began to be published in full, as well as the minutes of meetings of the Central Committee, its correspondence with local organizations and other important primary sources of Party history.

The Soviet press remained aloof from these stirrings of a new consciousness. Neither the events that followed the Twentieth Congress nor matters as momentous as the return of millions of

prisoners and exiles were conceded space in the columns of the central newspapers. In the last months of 1956 at least there was perhaps some excuse for this: the papers were filled with the events that had seized the attention of the rest of the world.

An Anxious Autumn: Poland, Hungary and Suez

The spring and summer of 1956 were marked by great activity in the sphere of foreign policy. Kim Il-sung and other leaders of North Korea visited Moscow, as did the Cambodian leader Norodom Sihanouk, the Shah of Iran, the head of Government of the German Democratic Republic, Otto Grotewohl, and the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Dag Hammarskjöld. An especially grand welcome was accorded to Sukarno, the President of the Republic of Indonesia and a hero of that country's fight for national independence.

In April 1956 a Soviet delegation headed by Mikoyan flew to Peking. China's first Five-Year Plan had been successfully accomplished, and the Chinese Government had asked the Soviet Union for additional economic aid. The Soviet Government met this request, agreeing to help to build fifty-five enterprises over and above the 156 large industrial establishments to which it was already committed. April also saw Khrushchev and Bulganin making their first state visit to one of the major countries of the West – Britain. It was not intended to lead to the conclusion of any treaty and was described as a friendly visit, nothing more. Khrushchev and Bulganin travelled as far as Kaliningrad by train and then, after looking round the city and harbour, boarded the cruiser *Ordzhonikidze* and arrived in Britain the next day. Khrushchev took great interest in what he saw there. He toured London and visited a number of other cities. Besides meeting Prime Minister Eden, he and Bulganin were received by Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II. Khrushchev also paid a visit to the 82-year-old Winston Churchill.

In May a French Government delegation flew to Moscow, headed by Prime Minister Guy Mollet and Foreign Minister Christian Pineau.

In the latter half of 1955 negotiations had begun in connection with a visit to the Soviet Union by President Tito, with a view to extending

the normalization of relations that had been initiated by Khrushchev's and Bulganin's visit to Yugoslavia in May of that year. But the differences between Khrushchev and Molotov over a number of foreign policy matters had become more pronounced; in particular, Molotov objected to the 'premature' *rapprochement* with Yugoslavia, whose leadership, in his view, was pursuing a 'revisionist' policy. Molotov was also very unhappy about the new style that Khrushchev had introduced into diplomacy, which was based on personal contact with heads of state. It was significant that Molotov did not accompany Khrushchev on his visits to Yugoslavia, India or Britain. He did not even take part in the meeting between the heads of the great powers held in Geneva, at which the Foreign Ministers of the United States, Britain and France were present. Clearly, this situation could not continue for long: it is hard to regard it as a coincidence that on the very day that Tito crossed the border into the Ukraine the Soviet press announced that Molotov had been released from his duties as Minister of Foreign Affairs. The post was assumed by the former editor-in-chief of *Pravda*, D. P. Shepilov.

Tito was given a ceremonial welcome in Moscow. Again, hundreds of thousands of Muscovites took to the streets through which the cars carrying Khrushchev, Bulganin and Tito and their entourage passed. As a rule, after talks in Moscow had been completed delegations from foreign governments toured the Soviet Union, accompanied by a group of Soviet officials below the highest rank. On this occasion, however, in order to demonstrate his special interest in his visitor, Khrushchev himself accompanied Tito on his tour. Tito's visit ended in Moscow with the signing of two communiqués: one underwrote more extensive commercial and cultural links between Yugoslavia and the USSR; the other expressed the two leaders' common desire to revive closer relations between the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and the Yugoslav League of Communists.

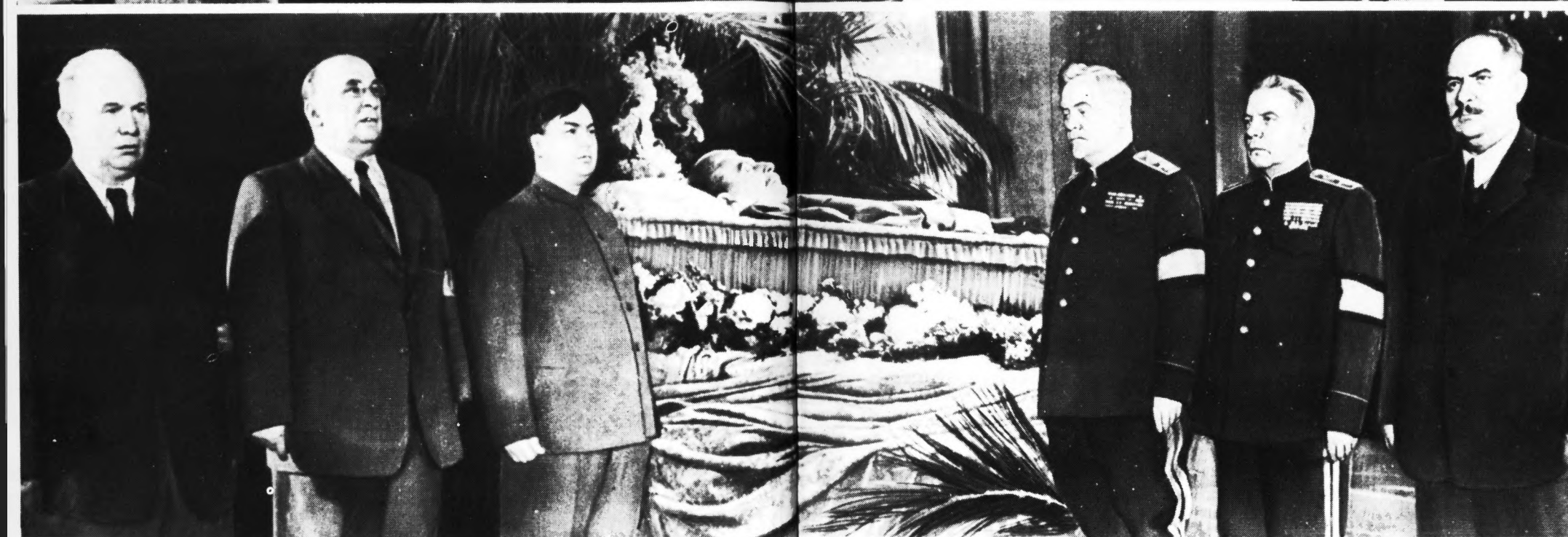
Elsewhere, however, matters were less harmonious. The exposure of the Stalin cult at the Twentieth Congress had given rise to serious political crises in some of the People's Democracies. The problem was overcome comparatively quickly in Bulgaria: the leader of the Bulgarian Communist Party, V. Chervenkov, was removed from his posts. The new leadership, headed by Todor Zhivkov, annulled the illegal trial of Traicho Kostov and rehabilitated all the Communists who had been unjustly condemned and executed in connection with that case. Those political prisoners who were still alive were freed. In Poland a different situation had developed. There although Gomulka, the former leader

of the Polish United Workers' Party, had been released from prison, he had not been restored to a leading position in the Party. (Stalin's man in Poland, Bierut, died in the spring of 1956, and Ochab had been elected First Secretary.) An even more difficult situation had emerged in Hungary, where power still remained in the hands of the same ruling group that had carried out mass repressions and show trials between 1949 and 1952 and where as many as 150,000 political prisoners had not yet been freed and rehabilitated.

In order to understand Khrushchev's attitude towards events in Poland and Hungary in the autumn of 1956, it is essential to bear in mind the fact that in that year, in the Presidium of the Central Committee and elsewhere, opposition to him had begun to take shape that exploited any blunder or failure on his part. There were many issues that Khrushchev could not deal with on his own; nor was he able to ignore the increasing pressure that was being brought to bear on him by the more conservative members of the Party leadership, who linked the political crises in Poland and Hungary with his 'secret' speech at the Twentieth Congress. In their view, his speech had done irreparable damage to the world Communist movement and to the standing of the Soviet Union among the socialist countries. (This view found increasing support among the Chinese leaders.) A reduction of the Soviet Union's influence in Poland and Hungary was inadmissible for strategic reasons – all members of the Presidium were agreed on that – but undesirable developments in Eastern Europe could also lead to Khrushchev's speedy demotion. He appreciated the dangers that threatened him and took appropriate measures in the autumn of 1956.

As soon as it became known in Moscow that a plenum of the Central Committee of the Polish United Workers' Party had been convened in Warsaw and that Gomulka had been co-opted to the Central Committee and was actively participating in the work of the plenum, Khrushchev realized that this indicated Gomulka's return to power in Poland. What might this development signify for Poland, where workers were demonstrating and striking and where collective farms were being disbanded? What effect would it have on Soviet-Polish relations? Khrushchev arranged for a Soviet Party and Government delegation to visit Poland immediately. For these talks the Presidium nominated a group consisting of Khrushchev, Mikoyan, Molotov and Kaganovich: it was already unwilling to entrust such a mission to Khrushchev alone. Because of the haste with which the arrangements were made, neither Moscow nor Warsaw managed to warn the frontier troops in time. Consequently, when a Soviet aeroplane crossed the





Above: Stalin's funeral. The cortège in Red Square. Khrushchev is on the extreme right, next to Beria and Chou En-lai.

Below: The lying in state. Left to right: Khrushchev, Beria, Malenkov, Bulganin, Voroshilov and Kaganovich pay their respects.



Above: Khrushchev with Brezhnev in the Second World War.
Below: In a wheatfield, September 1964.



Above: Khrushchev with potato on a collective farm, November 1954. Malenkov is next to him, smiling. *Below:* In Peking with Mao Tse-tung, 1958.

On following pages: Meeting the American stars of *Holiday on Ice* at a party in Moscow, 1959.





Soviet-Polish frontier several Polish fighters intercepted it; it was permitted to proceed no further until explanations were offered.

Among those on the Polish side who took part in the talks were Gomulka, Gierek, Ochab and Rokossovsky, who was then Poland's Minister of Defence. The Polish leaders managed to convince the Soviet delegation that only a rapid change in the leadership of the Polish United Workers' Party and extensive concessions to the Polish workers, who were demanding the creation of workers' councils, and to the Polish peasants, who were demanding the dissolution of the hastily formed collective farms, would enable the Party to retain overall control of the situation. Greater opportunities for freedom of speech, publication, assembly and demonstration were essential. The Soviet visitors could not but agree with their Polish colleagues. They had been convinced that under Gomulka's leadership Poland would continue to be a firm ally of the Soviet Union, however, and next day the Soviet delegation returned to Moscow.

The crisis in Hungary proved much less tractable. The Party leadership there had simply disintegrated, having forfeited the people's confidence. The Army command had lost control over the forces, and the leadership of the security organizations had ceased to function. A Government had come to power that was led by Imre Nagy, who had been restored to Party membership not long before but was still opposed both to the Party's former policy and to its former leadership. All political prisoners were released. In its aims and driving force this was at first a national-democratic revolution, but it soon developed into a movement for severing all Hungary's ties with the Soviet Union. In Budapest and other cities all symbols of Hungary's dependence on the USSR were destroyed. The composition of Nagy's Government was changed to include representatives of some of the non-Communist parties that had rapidly come to life again. Tens of thousands of political émigrés began to return to Budapest, the frontiers being now virtually open. Former officials of the security branches and Party officials were killed. Party institutions were destroyed and many Communists lost their lives defending the premises of the Budapest City Committee of the Party. Nagy's Government demanded the withdrawal from Budapest of the Soviet forces stationed there under the terms of the peace treaty that had been concluded between the Soviet Union and Hungary a few years after the end of the Second World War.

Liu Shao-chi, China's deputy head of state, flew to Moscow for consultations and to co-ordinate action. Meetings of the Presidium

were held almost daily. Neither Khrushchev nor the other members of the Presidium could reach any firm decision: one day they leaned towards intervention; the next they changed their minds. Under the influence of contradictory reports from Hungary, Khrushchev ordered the immediate withdrawal of Soviet troops from Budapest and, at the same time, the considerable reinforcement of the Soviet troops elsewhere in Hungary. Several fresh divisions crossed the frontier. Finally, Khrushchev decided on armed intervention in Budapest, but he wanted to secure both China's agreement to it and that of the Governments of the other socialist countries, especially Yugoslavia. He had devoted considerable effort to normalizing relations with Yugoslavia, and he undoubtedly hoped that the country would soon rejoin the camp of the socialist countries headed by the Soviet Union. He also needed to secure the co-operation of a group of prominent figures in Hungary who would agree to head a new Government and to restore the Communist Party. The latter task was to be accomplished by Suslov, Mikoyan and the Soviet Ambassador in Hungary, Andropov. Khrushchev himself, accompanied by Malenkov, flew to Warsaw and Bucharest to discuss the Hungarian events with the leaders of Poland, Romania, Czechoslovakia and Bulgaria, whose agreement to armed intervention was quickly obtained. Khrushchev then decided to fly at once to Brioni Island for talks with Tito. It was not flying weather, but that did not deter him. This is how he describes the episode in his memoirs:

Late that evening Malenkov and I took off for Yugoslavia to consult with Comrade Tito. The weather couldn't have been worse. We had to fly through the mountains at night in a fierce thunderstorm. Lightning was flashing all around us. I didn't sleep a wink. I had flown a great deal, especially since the war, but I'd never flown in conditions this bad. We had a very experienced pilot named General Tsybin. During the storm we lost contact with our escort reconnaissance plane, which was flying ahead of us. We were heading towards Brioni Island off the coast of Yugoslavia. The local airfield was poorly equipped. It was one of those primitive airstrips built during the war. But, thanks to the skill of Comrade Tsybin, we made it. . . . There was a car waiting for us, which took us to a pier. We climbed into a motor launch and headed towards Comrade Tito's place on Brioni Island. Malenkov was as pale as a corpse. He gets car-sick on a good road. We had just landed after the roughest flight imaginable, and now we were heading out into a choppy sea in a small launch. Malenkov lay down in the boat and shut his eyes. I was worried about what kind of shape he'd be in when we docked, but

we didn't have any choice. As the old Russian saying goes, we couldn't sit on the beach and wait for good weather.

Tito was waiting for us when we arrived on the island. He welcomed us cordially. We embraced and kissed each other, although until recently our relations had been strained, and they were becoming more and more strained as the events in Hungary developed. We differed over the most advisable course of action.

We told Tito why we had come and confronted him with our decision to send troops into Budapest. We asked for his reaction. I expected even more strenuous objections than the ones we had encountered during our discussions with the Polish comrades. But we were pleasantly surprised. Tito said that we were absolutely right and that we should send our soldiers into action as quickly as possible. He said we had an obligation to help Hungary crush the counter-revolution. He assured us that he completely understood the necessity of taking these measures. We had been ready for resistance, but instead we received his wholehearted support. I would even say he went further than we did in urging a speedy and decisive resolution of the problem.¹

In Hungary, under the protection and cover of Soviet army units, a group of prominent Hungarian Communists headed by János Kádár, Antal Apró and Ferenc Munnich had agreed to form a new Revolutionary Workers' and Peasants' Government of Hungary in opposition to Nagy's Government. The agreement with Tito dispelled Khrushchev's last doubts. With the approval of the other members of the Presidium, he ordered that the revolt in Budapest be crushed immediately, that the Nagy Government be ousted and that full support be given to the Kádár Government. Zhukov's solution to the problem of the Hungarian army units and organized groups of the population that remained loyal to Nagy was characteristic: Soviet massed tanks, artillery and mechanized infantry were mobilized. The two sides were so unequal that resistance to Soviet forces was quickly crushed all over Hungary.

Some members of Nagy's Government fled the country, while others, led by Nagy himself, took refuge in the Yugoslav Embassy. Nagy asked Yugoslavia for political asylum, but the coach taking him and his colleagues from the Embassy was stopped, despite the Yugoslav Ambassador's protests. Nagy was arrested and shot two years later without an open trial. His execution was an act of unwarranted savagery. The whole deplorable episode led to a worsening of relations between the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia.

In parallel with the crises in Poland and Hungary, an acute political

and military *débâcle* had developed in the Middle East over the issue of the Suez Canal, which had been nationalized that summer by President Nasser. Britain, France and Israel, resolutely opposed to the measure, had launched a combined military action against Egypt, with the aim of occupying the Canal Zone. The Egyptian Army resisted but lacked sufficient strength to repel the aggressors. The United States did not take part in this operation, and a majority in the United Nations Security Council called for an immediate ceasefire. But Britain and France possessed the power of veto in the Council. Of decisive importance in this situation was the fact that the Soviet Union not only voiced her support for Egypt and for the nationalization of the Suez Canal but also offered military aid to Egypt if it were needed. A Tass statement mentioned that many Soviet citizens were requesting to be sent to Egypt as volunteers to help the Egyptian Army. The recent operations in Hungary suggested that the claim was no mere bluff. The possibility that Soviet forces might appear in the Middle East seriously alarmed the United States. Finding themselves isolated, Britain and France ordered their troops to halt the operation and to evacuate the Canal Zone. Shortly afterwards the Israeli forces withdrew from Sinai.

By the end of November Khrushchev could consider that the most acute of the crises that had dominated the Soviet Union's foreign policy had been successfully overcome – but the costs had been high. Relations with Yugoslavia had been severely damaged by the arrest of Imre Nagy. (It is not clear who gave the order for that, since Khrushchev's power was limited at that time.) In the Middle East the Soviet Union had undertaken to construct the Aswan Dam and had considerably increased her military and economic aid to Egypt. Generally, her foreign obligations increased enormously after 1956, and her commitments subsequently hampered her own economic development.

The June Plenum: the First Palace Revolution

From the economic standpoint, 1956 was a successful year, but when they opened their newspapers on 1 April Soviet citizens found no mention of the traditional reductions in the prices of foodstuffs and manufactured goods. It had been decided to channel considerable state subsidies not into price reductions but into other measures that affected the interests and needs of ordinary people. From spring 1956 the number of hours worked on days preceding holidays and rest-days was reduced by two. A shorter working week was laid down for youngsters of 16 and 17. Neither measure entailed cuts in wages. Maternity leave was extended. The separate education of boys and girls in urban schools, which had been introduced under Stalin, had been abolished the year before; now fees were no longer to be charged for instruction in the senior forms of secondary schools and in higher- and middle-level special educational institutions. The most important social measure, however, was undoubtedly the new law concerning higher state pensions that was adopted at the July session of the Supreme Soviet. All workers had previously received pensions in respect of old age, disablement or long service, but those pensions had not been reviewed since before the war, although the retail prices of all goods, as well as wages, had substantially increased. People living on pensions had often found it impossible to maintain even a very modest standard of living, and pensioners who had no children had been particularly impoverished, since Soviet law obliges children to help their elderly parents.

In July a good grain crop was ripening over an area of 30 million hectares in the virgin lands, and by the beginning of August it was clear there would be a record harvest – a success that greatly strengthened Khrushchev's political position, because the policy of priority investment in the virgin lands was being strongly criticized in

certain circles of the Central Committee. Khrushchev visited the virgin lands in northern Kazakhstan, Altai and Siberia, where he discussed with farmers the important questions of how to get the expected harvest in and how to safeguard it, as too few barns and roads had been built in those areas. At the beginning of September many oblasts reported extremely good yields: a total of 127 million tonnes of grain was harvested in the Soviet Union that year, of which 57 million tonnes went towards state procurement. Other crops had also done well, and the amount of meat that was available on the market had increased considerably. Industry was flourishing as well. Industrial production had risen by 11 per cent during the year. The construction of a number of large-scale enterprises had been completed and a start made on some still larger-scale projects, such as the Bratsk hydro-electric power station. Thousands of houses had been built in every city. In Moscow the largest sports complex in the world, the Central Lenin Stadium, had been opened.

At the end of the year and at the beginning of 1957 Khrushchev again undertook a prolonged tour of the USSR, visiting Central Asia, the Urals and the Volga country. Numerous oblasts and Republics were awarded the Order of Lenin for their success, as were obkom secretaries and other leading figures in areas with particularly commendable records. The Order of Lenin and a second Hero of Socialist Labour medal were awarded to Voroshilov and to Khrushchev himself. The decree of the USSR Supreme Soviet on that occasion declared, in so many words, that Khrushchev deserved the award for his successful leadership in organizing the development of the virgin and fallow lands.

It was no secret to Khrushchev that he had opponents in the Presidium, but they were not united: the intrigues and feuds of the Stalin period still divided them. Yet discontent with his activities mounted at all levels of the Party and state apparatus as a result of his political and economic initiatives in the first half of 1957.

That year saw the continued rehabilitation of many people whose cases had not been fully re-examined in 1956. Thus, after protracted discussions in the Politburo, and under strong pressure from Khrushchev, rehabilitation was granted to a large group of Soviet Army commanders (among them M. Tukhachevsky, I. Yakir, I. Uborevich and Ya. Gamarnik), most of whom had been sentenced by the Military Collegium of the Supreme Court in 1937 and subsequently executed. This inevitably cast a shadow over Voroshilov and Budyonny, who had actively assisted Stalin in destroying military

cadres in 1936–8. Of particular moment was the rehabilitation of a number of 'disgraced' national groups that had been illegally deported from their national territories in 1944 on the basis of slanderous and groundless charges – the Kalmucks, the Chechens and Ingushes and the Balkar and Karachai peoples. The measure was just, but its ramifications had not been foreseen. What was involved was the return, principally from Kazakhstan and Central Asia, of several millions of people whose homes and lands had been occupied after the war by settlers from other Republics. It had been envisaged that their resettlement would take place over several years, but when the 'disgraced' peoples learned that they had been rehabilitated and that their Autonomous Republics had been restored, they demanded to return to their native lands at once, and hundreds of thousands of them started to make their way back by their own means, without waiting for compensation payments or grants. The difficulties that they faced were shared by the Kurds, Greeks and Turks who had previously lived in various parts of Caucasia and on the Black Sea coast and were now returning home after having been deported to locations in the east in 1944–5.

There remained the question of the Germans of the Volga region and elsewhere in the USSR who had been unjustly accused of treason at the beginning of the war and deported to eastern areas of the Soviet Union. Their situation improved – the concentration camps were dissolved; some of them were rehabilitated and allowed to return home; German settlements were established on the virgin and fallow lands – but formal rehabilitation of the entire German national group in the Soviet Union was not granted until August 1964, and even then the Volga Germans' ASSR was not restored. Still worse was the position of the Crimean Tatars, hundreds of thousands of whom had been deported to Central Asia in 1945. The Crimean ASSR, which had been dissolved, was not restored despite the glaring injustice of the allegations made against the Crimean Tatars. In its place a Crimean oblast had been created in 1945. Then in 1954, although the Crimea had never formed part of the Ukraine, it was for some reason 'transferred' from the RSFSR to the Ukraine on the occasion of the tercentenary of the union between the Ukraine and Russia.

Although Khrushchev was not disposed to raise the question of the responsibility of particular individuals for crimes of the past, in certain cases this could not be avoided. With the re-establishment of the Chechen–Ingush ASSR, for example, it was revealed that when those peoples were deported in 1944 the NKVD troops had completely

destroyed a village whose inhabitants had refused to leave. Responsibility for this monstrous deed was laid at the door of Kruglov, until recently Minister of Internal Affairs. Without waiting for the investigation of his guilt to be completed, Kruglov killed himself. Naturally, such investigations roused the hostility of many high-ranking Party officials – as did another of Khrushchev's initiatives. The precise date is not known, but it was apparently in the first half of 1957 that the notorious 'envelope' system was abolished – the monthly payments made to Party and state executives that were in some cases two or three times larger than the recipients' official salaries. No tax had to be paid on the sums received, and no Party dues were even deducted from them. This system, which had been introduced by Stalin, was, in Khrushchev's view, too flagrant a violation of the Twentieth Party Congress's avowed intention to restore Leninist standards in Party and state life to be allowed to survive any longer.

Molotov, Kaganovich, Malenkov and Voroshilov were opposed to most of these measures, but they decided not to confront Khrushchev because they constituted only a minority among the Party's leadership. The situation changed, however, when Khrushchev introduced his proposal for a thorough review of the structure and character of the management of the economy. He proposed in particular to abolish most of the Ministries and to entrust the direction of industrial enterprises to newly created territorial administrations, to be called Economic Councils (*Sovnarkhozes*). In itself, the idea of extending the powers of local organizations with respect to the management of industry was sound and merited both discussion and experiment, for the economy had become extremely complex. By the beginning of 1957 the Soviet Union could boast more than 200,000 industrial enterprises, large and small, and about 100,000 construction projects of various sizes. It was becoming harder and harder to manage this gigantic and complex organism from a single centre. There had already been some decentralization of management in 1953–6, when about 15,000 enterprises had been transferred from the control of all-Union Ministries to the direct control of Ministries in the Republics. There was still room for improvement in the planning and administration of the economy, however.

Many members of the Presidium doubted the wisdom of Khrushchev's solution, although again they refrained from overt opposition. Their doubts were fully justified. The proposed system had not been tested. It might prove suitable for such large industrial centres as Leningrad and Moscow or the Sverdlovsk oblast but quite inappro-

priate for the oblasts and Republics of northern Caucasia or Kazakhstan. An Azerbaidjan Sovnarkhoz might administer the local oil wells and oil-processing plants better than any department in Moscow could, but how would it cope with branches of industry that were represented in the Republic by no more than one or two enterprises? Who was to settle disputes between Sovnarkhozes? Who would co-ordinate the administration of related enterprises located in different economic zones? Khrushchev and his supporters could offer no convincing answers.

The reservations of members of the Presidium did not deter Khrushchev, who convened a plenum of the Central Committee to air the issue. The idea of Sovnarkhozes, which was not very popular with heads of Ministries, seemed quite attractive to secretaries of obkoms and Central Committees of national Communist Parties, for whom they would provide additional levers for directing the industry of their own oblasts or Republics. The Central Committee plenum approved Khrushchev's proposal, and from spring 1957 onwards plans for the structure of the Sovnarkhozes, their internal organization, their establishment of staff and so on were drawn up. The press featured discussions of all the problems associated with the new system; although by no means all critical material was published, this public discussion did reveal the problem to be a great deal more complex than might have been supposed from the Central Committee's outlines. But this did not persuade Khrushchev to alter his timetable for introducing the reform. At the beginning of May 1957 a session of the Supreme Soviet was convened, which, after hearing a report by Khrushchev, approved 'the further improvement of the management of industry and building work'. Of the former industrial Ministries, only the Ministries of Aviation, Defence, Radio Technology, Shipbuilding, the Chemical Industry, Medium Engineering, Transport Construction and Electric Power Stations were retained for the time being. The other Ministries were dissolved and their functions handed over to the territorial Sovnarkhozes.

The discontent inflamed by this hasty reorganization assisted Khrushchev's opponents in the Presidium, who entered into a complicated intrigue against him. They were helped by Khrushchev himself, who took it into his head to march under a new banner, without raising the matter in the Presidium. He declared that within three or four years the Soviet Union would catch up with the USA in her production of meat, milk and butter per head of population. This notion probably occurred to Khrushchev early in the spring of 1957,

when it became clear that meat production in the winter of 1956–7 had increased considerably by comparison with that of 1955–6. The increase was one of the results of the good harvest of 1956, however, and any serious calculation of future achievements would have needed to be based not on the results of a single year but on the average figures for several years. In reply to questions put to them by Khrushchev, agricultural specialists had claimed that the Soviet Union could match the United States' production per head of milk and butter within a few years; but in fact there was not much of a demand for butter and milk in the USA, and over several decades American farmers had reduced rather than increased their production. Meat, of which the United States produced 102 kilograms per head of population and the USSR only 32, was quite a different matter: after making some calculations and discussing the issue, economists told Khrushchev that the USSR would not be able to catch up with the USA until 1975.¹ But he only laughed: he regarded their calculations as the products of bureaucratic caution about the potentialities of Soviet agriculture. Speaking in Leningrad at a meeting of north-western agricultural workers and later at a great assembly of Leningraders in Palace Square, he openly proclaimed his conviction that Soviet meat production could quickly rival that of the United States. He did make the reservation that it might take five years to achieve this, but no longer than that. In 1956 meat production in the Soviet Union amounted to 6.6 million tonnes; it had increased since 1953 by no more than 800,000 tonnes. Progress was slow because of the shortage of fodder, the extremely low level of mechanization of the livestock farms and the high cost of production. With procurement prices at the 1957 level, in nearly every zone meat was being produced at a loss by the collective and state farms. Yet Khrushchev was proposing to increase the production to 20 million tonnes by 1961. . . . Khrushchev's ambitious target came up for discussion in the Presidium after the Leningrad meeting. It was opposed by the majority of members, but he brushed their objections aside.

On 5 June 1957 Khrushchev and Bulganin left Moscow to pay an official visit to Finland and spent over a week there, returning on 14 June. Khrushchev's absence had furnished Molotov, Malenkov and Kaganovich with a fine opportunity to prepare for a meeting of the Presidium at which they intended to settle the matter of Khrushchev's removal from the post of First Secretary of the Central Committee.

The Presidium met in the Kremlin on 18 June 1957. The meeting was an unusual one, lasting for nearly three days, and the Kremlin guard was reinforced. Of the members and candidates for membership

of the Presidium, the only person who was absent, apparently, was F. R. Kozlov. A long list of charges was levelled at Khrushchev. Basically, he was accused of economic 'voluntarism' and wilful action, and some of the points of criticism were justified. The principal charge, however, which was not voiced openly but was certainly the most important one in the eyes of Khrushchev's opponents, was that he had gone too far in exposing Stalin, that he had undermined the authority of the Party in the international Communist movement and of the movement generally. In other words, what was at issue was a reconsideration of the decisions of the Twentieth Congress and the domestic and foreign policy agreed at that Congress. Khrushchev's opponents, counting on success, had also discussed beforehand what should be done with Khrushchev himself. If he admitted his mistakes, he would be given a lower-ranking post (for example, that of Minister of Agriculture); otherwise the possibility of his arrest had not been ruled out. He was extremely popular with most of the population and with the obkom secretaries who made up the majority in the Central Committee: to leave him at liberty might be dangerous. The Presidium intended to elect Molotov First Secretary in place of Khrushchev.

Khrushchev resolutely rejected all of the charges brought against him. He defended and justified his actions between 1953 and 1957, referring to his economic and diplomatic successes. In the debate that developed he was strongly supported by Mikoyan, Suslov and Kirichenko. Seven members of the Presidium spoke against him: Molotov, Malenkov, Voroshilov, Kaganovich, Bulganin, Pervukhin and Saburov. Apparently, all the candidates for membership present also supported him, but they attended meetings of the Presidium in a consultative capacity only. In the course of the protracted discussions Shepilov unexpectedly shifted his position and went over to the side of the majority.

In the end, the Presidium adopted a resolution to replace Khrushchev in the post of First Secretary. He refused to submit to this decision. He declared that he had been elected to his post not by the Presidium but by a plenum of the Central Committee and that only such a plenum could now remove him from that post. He demanded that a plenum of the Central Committee be convened. The Presidium rejected this proposal, but the Molotov-Kaganovich group was not able to put its resolution into immediate effect; it placed too much faith in a formal decision by a majority of the Presidium. The success of the operation that had been mounted in March 1953, when a group of fifteen or twenty men had settled all questions connected with the distribution of

power beside the grave of a Stalin only just dead, was not repeated on this occasion. Furthermore, the contingency plan, the forcible arrest of Khrushchev, had been a chimera because the Army (in the person of Zhukov) and the KGB (in the person of Serov) remained loyal to him.

The news that Khrushchev's fate was being decided in the Kremlin became known to some members of the Central Committee, among them Serov. They informed Kozlov, who at once travelled from Leningrad with a group of Central Committee members. They demanded the summoning of a plenum, but the Presidium rejected the demand and even refused to meet those who were making it. The latter then submitted a formal application to the Presidium, which read:

It has become known to us, members of the Central Committee, that the Presidium of the Central Committee is in continuous session. We have also learned that you are discussing the question of the leadership of the Central Committee and of its Secretariat. Matters of such great importance to the whole Party cannot be kept from members of the Central Committee plenum. We members of the Central Committee cannot remain indifferent to the question of the leadership of our Party.

This application had no effect, but the number of members of the Central Committee who were gathering in Moscow was growing. They drove in from nearby oblasts and flew in from the remotest oblasts and Republics. A delegation of members of the Central Committee headed by Serov, to whom the Kremlin guards were subordinate, appeared in the entrance hall of the building in which the Presidium was meeting and repeated their demand that a plenum be convened. The majority of the Presidium, who considered Khrushchev already practically removed from his post, decided to send out Bulganin, as Chairman of the Council of Ministers, and Voroshilov, as Chairman of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet, to talk with the delegation. Khrushchev insisted that he too should participate in this conversation, and Mikoyan accompanied him.

The encounter was at first extremely rough. Voroshilov hurled abuse at Serov, who gave back as good as he got and then grabbed Voroshilov by the shirt collar and threatened that if the Presidium opposed the convening of a Central Committee plenum, a plenum would be held without the Presidium's approval. As the majority of members of the Central Committee were now in Moscow, they would not allow the Presidium to decide the question of the Party leadership without them. It was clear that the plot against Khrushchev had failed.

The Presidium was obliged to agree to convene a plenum of the Central Committee, and when the plenum met in the Kremlin the overwhelming majority of Central Committee members supported Khrushchev unconditionally.

The plenum continued from 22 to 29 June. It heard a report by Khrushchev entitled 'On the Situation in the Party'. Molotov was also given an opportunity to deliver a detailed address setting forth his point of view. Almost all who spoke at the plenum supported Khrushchev (his erstwhile opponents now preferred to side with the majority). Penitent speeches were made by Voroshilov, Bulganin, Pervukhin and Saburov, and Malenkov also admitted that he had been wrong about certain matters. Only Molotov remained stubborn to the end: when the vote was taken on the plenum's resolution, he alone abstained. All the other members of his group voted for a resolution that condemned their own conduct.

The resolution of the plenum and a brief note on its work were published by the press on 4 July. The resolution spoke of 'the anti-Party group of Molotov, Kaganovich and Malenkov', but nothing was said of the participation of Voroshilov, Bulganin and the others. Voroshilov and Bulganin remained members of the Presidium and retained their other posts; Molotov, Malenkov, Kaganovich and Shepilov lost their seats, and neither Pervukhin nor Saburov was included in the new Presidium, the membership of which rose to fifteen. Almost all those who had been candidates for membership took their places in the Presidium: L. I. Brezhnev, G. K. Zhukov, E. A. Furtseva, F. R. Kozlov, N. M. Shvernik, A. B. Aristov, N. I. Belyayev and an old member of the Party and of the Communist Party of Finland, O. V. Kuusinen. Among the nine candidates for membership were A. P. Kirilenko, A. N. Kosygin and K. T. Mazurov. Some three weeks later, on 29 July, Molotov, Kaganovich and Malenkov were dismissed from their posts as First Vice-Chairmen of the Council of Ministers, and Shepilov was replaced as Minister of Foreign Affairs by A. A. Gromyko. According to Khrushchev, two days after the plenum Kaganovich had telephoned him, and the following exchange had taken place:

'Comrade Khrushchev, I have known you for many years. I beg you not to allow them to deal with me as they dealt with people under Stalin.'

'Comrade Kaganovich, your words confirm once again what methods you wanted to use to attain your vile ends. You wanted the country to revert to the order that existed under the personality cult.'

You wanted to kill people. You measure others by your own yardstick. But you are mistaken. We apply Leninist principles with vigour and will continue to apply them. You will be given a job. You will be able to work and live in peace if you work honestly like all Soviet people.²

Khrushchev kept his word. None of the members of the factional group was expelled from the Party. Molotov was appointed Ambassador to Mongolia; Malenkov was made manager of a large electric power station and Kaganovich manager of a factory; Shepilov went to work as a lecturer in one of the higher educational institutions. In July 1957 Pervukhin and Saburov were dismissed. Their duties as Vice-Chairmen of the Council of Ministers were assumed by Kosygin and D. F. Ustinov.

In July Khrushchev visited Leningrad at the head of a central government delegation. The formal purpose of the visit was to confer decorations on Leningraders on the occasion of the city's 250th anniversary. Later that month he paid a fortnight's visit to Czechoslovakia and, in August, one to the German Democratic Republic, accompanied in both cases by Bulganin. The end of July and the beginning of August saw the Sixth International Festival of Youth and Students in Moscow – a colourful affair that made a lasting impression on the Muscovites. It was the first time in the history of the Soviet Union that so many foreign visitors had gathered in Moscow. At the end of August Tass reported the testing of atomic and hydrogen bombs and of Soviet inter-continental ballistic missiles, but the news was scarcely acknowledged abroad. In September Khrushchev took a holiday in the Crimea, not far from Yalta. Under Stalin he had been able to spend his holiday at the seaside only once, in 1947; in other years there had been no question of holidays. Between 1953 and 1956 he had been so busy that he could allow himself only very short breaks. On this occasion he was able to spend a whole month in the Crimea, and it was 2 October before he returned to Moscow, just as Zhukov left for a lengthy visit to Yugoslavia and Albania.

Two days later the Soviet Union took the whole world by surprise when she launched the first artificial Earth satellite. The achievement was the result of a great deal of work by Soviet scientists and designers since 1945, their principal task at that time being the construction of missiles for the purposes of war, especially missiles capable of incapacitating American high-flying aircraft. The launching of the satellite also testified to the Soviet Union's achievements in the fields of electronics, computer technology and many other areas of science and

technology. (In 1957 the first cyclotron was built, for example, and the first nuclear-powered ship, the *Lenin*, was launched.) Groups of scientists and technicians, headed by Academicians S. P. Korolev, M. Keldysh, V. P. Glushko, N. A. Pilygin, V. P. Barmin and M. K. Yangel, had produced increasingly sophisticated designs for missiles, the last of which was capable of launching an artificial satellite into orbit around the Earth. Khrushchev had devoted a great deal of attention to the needs of the rocket engineers and designers and could therefore regard the launching of the first satellite as a personal success.

The world's press was filled with news of the Soviet *Sputnik*; the psychological and political consequences of the Soviet Union's success in space were very extensive. The Soviet satellite made a particularly strong impression on scientific and military-political circles in the United States, where modifications were even made to the educational system and to school and university curricula, and a number of munitions programmes were reviewed. Meanwhile, no more than a month after this initial success, the Soviet Union had launched another satellite, this time with an experimental animal on board. Americans regarded this second success as a humiliation, for they were unable to launch their first satellite until 1 February 1958.

The success of the Soviet space programme was a splendid tribute to mark the fortieth anniversary of the October Revolution, which was celebrated triumphantly all over the country. Delegations from all the socialist countries and from nearly all the Communist Parties in the world attended the celebrations. Khrushchev met the most important of the delegations, and it was he who gave the address at the jubilee session of the Supreme Soviet.

Conferences of the Communist Parties then began in Moscow. First there was a conference of representatives of the twelve Communist and Workers' Parties of the socialist countries (14–16 November), and then representatives of sixty-four Communist and Workers' Parties attended another conference, which, like the first, established the principle of a new form of co-operation. The speeches and discussions were not published either in 1957 or later. All that appeared in the press were the 'Final Declaration' and the 'Peace Manifesto' adopted at the conferences, which expressed complete approval of the results and resolutions of the Twentieth Congress. Yet there were disputes, both when Khrushchev met Mao Tse-tung on 11 November and at the general meetings of the delegations. One of the participants in these gatherings, Shmuel Mikunis, then leader of the Israeli Communist Party, later wrote:

In the way he spoke and held himself, and in the way he replied to questions, [Mao Tse-tung] resembled a sage of ancient China. He gave me that impression, at any rate, when I saw him for the first time in St George's Hall. He had trouble with his legs and usually spoke sitting down. His favourite theme, to which he kept returning, was World War III. He regarded this as an absolutely inevitable event, for which one must be ready at any moment. I would even go so far as to say that he lived and thought in terms of this war, as though it had already begun. I well remember how he sat there, surrounded by Soviet delegates, and philosophized aloud: 'Nehru and I', he said, 'are at present discussing the question of how many people would perish in an atomic war. Nehru says that we'll lose a milliard and a half, but I say only a milliard and a quarter.'

Palmiro Togliatti then asked him: 'But what would become of Italy as a result of such a war?' Mao Tse-tung looked at him in a thoughtful way and replied, quite coolly: 'But who told you that Italy must survive? Three hundred million Chinese will be left, and that will be enough for the human race to continue.' Mao saw himself as the leader of world Communism, the direct successor of Stalin, and therefore assumed that he had the right to intervene in the affairs of all Communist Parties, including the Soviet Party. He talked a lot, but in an absolutely peremptory way: he did not so much talk as insist. . . . For instance, he was very displeased at Khrushchev's having removed Molotov, Malenkov and Kaganovich from the leadership and said: 'You should have consulted me before you took that step.'

While the entire world was following the flight of the first Soviet satellite, another plenum of the Central Committee had assembled in Moscow. Even before it met, a decision had been adopted by the Presidium – not published, but with immediate effect – to dismiss Marshal Zhukov from his post as Minister of Defence and to replace him by Marshal Malinovsky. Khrushchev knew Malinovsky well because fate had brought them together during the war on a number of occasions – in the retreat from the Ukraine in 1941 and again when the Ukraine was being liberated in 1943–5. Malinovsky held the post of First Deputy Minister of Defence and Commander-in-Chief of land forces in 1957; it was clearly not going to be difficult for him to secure the loyalty and co-operation of the entire armed forces of the Soviet Union.

Zhukov's removal from the post of Minister of Defence took place while he was in Albania. Naturally, he was recalled. On his arrival in Moscow he went straight from the airport to the Kremlin, to the Central Committee plenum, where the question of improving Party

political work in the Army and Navy was being discussed. The unsatisfactory state of this work was deemed to be Zhukov's responsibility. He was accused of treating Party political workers in the Army with contempt and of seeking adulation in military circles. A number of distinguished marshals, generals, admirals and political workers spoke at the plenum. While acknowledging Zhukov's merits, they criticized him for his rudeness and vanity and for exaggerating his own achievements. The plenum decided to remove him from the Presidium and from the Central Committee and to 'find other work for him'. But he did not take up any other work and retired shortly afterwards.

The dismissal of Zhukov, only a few months after he had become a member of the Central Committee's Presidium, was on the face of it a surprising decision. There had been no conflict between Zhukov and Khrushchev up to this point. Zhukov's loyalty had helped to dispose of the Beria group in 1953 and in 1957 had aided Khrushchev to overcome the Molotov-Malenkov-Kaganovich group. He was ambitious, but that is a characteristic of most military commanders. It is hard to imagine Zhukov's attempting a military coup. Nevertheless, under a strong and independent Minister like Zhukov the Central Committee's control over the army had been considerably weakened. He resented the interference of politicians in military matters and had sought sole jurisdiction over the Army. In the summer of 1957 he had introduced a number of military reforms without first submitting his proposals to the Central Committee – for example, political workers in the Army were thenceforth required to study military theory alongside Army commanders, a move that provoked strident objections from many leading political workers. Zhukov took little notice of the recommendations made to him by the Main Political Directorate of the Ministry of Defence. In different circumstances it is conceivable that he might have offered a challenge to the authority of Khrushchev himself. Khrushchev took care to ensure that no such eventuality could possibly arise.

Soon after the October plenum the powers and functions of the political organs in the Army and Navy were extended. A newly constituted Main Political Directorate of the Army and Navy now operated as a department of the Central Committee and assumed responsibility for the administration and supervision of all Party work in the Soviet armed forces.⁴ With great dexterity, Khrushchev had consolidated his position.

PART FIVE

The Summit of Power
1958–1960

At the Helm: Reforms Civil and Military

By the beginning of 1958 there was no longer any opposition to Khrushchev either in the Presidium of the Central Committee or in the Council of Ministers. His power and influence were unassailable and, in practice, almost unlimited.

On New Year's Eve he held a large reception in the Great Hall of the Kremlin. It was attended by all the members of the Presidium, the Ministers and the principal economic and military leaders, the most prominent figures in the world of culture and art, the managers of dozens of enterprises, the ambassadors of all the countries represented in Moscow, the Patriarch of All Russia and the higher clergy of the Orthodox Church. Khrushchev and Bulganin proposed most of the toasts. Later a concert was held in the Kremlin Hall, in which the Soviet Union's most celebrated artistes and musicians took part. But Khrushchev was soon on the move again. Early in the new year he went to Poland to take a short holiday and to discuss a number of practical problems with the Polish leaders. Then he travelled to Minsk to attend a conference of advanced workers in agriculture.

At the end of March the first session of the newly elected Supreme Soviet opened in the Kremlin. In accordance with established custom, the Chairman of the Council of Ministers (at that time Bulganin) sent a letter to the Presidium that stated:

In conformity with Article 70 of the Constitution of the USSR and in connection with the fact that the question of forming the Government of the USSR is subject to consideration by the Supreme Soviet of the USSR, the USSR Council of Ministers regards its powers as having expired and lays them before the Supreme Soviet.

The Supreme Soviet acknowledged this formality and resolved 'to approve the activity of the USSR Council of Ministers'. Voroshilov

then proposed that Khrushchev be appointed Chairman of the Council of Ministers. His proposal was adopted unanimously. Thus, while continuing to hold the post of First Secretary of the Central Committee, Khrushchev also assumed (just as Stalin had) the responsibilities and authority of the head of the executive power. Furthermore, a Supreme Defence Council was created to unify the leadership of all the war departments, and Khrushchev was also appointed chairman of that, so that he now held in his hands all the principal levers of Party, state and military power. His deputies at the head of the Council of Ministers were F. R. Kozlov, A. I. Mikoyan, A. N. Kosygin, A. F. Zasyadko, I. I. Kuzmin and D. F. Ustinov. The former head of the Government, Bulganin, was appointed Chairman of the State Bank of the USSR.

Khrushchev wasted no time in implementing certain radical reforms, not all of which won him the approval of his colleagues. One of the issues to which he devoted a great deal of time and attention that summer and autumn was the resolution of the many problems posed by the educational system of the Soviet Union. In July he circulated to the members of the Central Committee a memorandum entitled 'On strengthening the link between school and life, and on the further development of the educational system'. It was also read out at conferences of leading educational workers and was published in the newspapers at the beginning of the autumn. The document was a broadside aimed at the educational system. In many respects its criticisms were wholly justified.

Under Stalin the Soviet schools had rejected the ideas and practices that had been popular in the 1920s – the principle of polytechnical instruction and the combination of education and productive labour. As many pupils as was practicable had left the enterprises that they had joined to learn about production; even the small workshops that had been set up in the schools were abolished; and the subject of labour had been dropped from the curriculum. The workers' faculties – special schools for young workers – had also been abolished and trade schools established in their place that served primarily the children of poorer families. The secondary schools that provided children with a general education were oriented principally towards preparing their pupils for higher education. Verbal instruction had become the dominant teaching method.

With the expansion of the secondary schools, however, only a minority of those who passed through them could go on to higher education. The rest went to swell the ranks of the workers, blue- and

white-collar, although they had not been prepared for this fate either practically or morally. A stark discrepancy was apparent between the aims of the schools and the practicalities of working life and between the structure of the educational system and the economic needs of the country, and it precipitated the revival of polytechnical instruction. In the junior and middle forms two hours a week began to be devoted to 'labour instruction', and small workshops were again established in the schools. In the senior forms four hours a week were put aside for such subjects as 'the foundations of mechanical engineering' and 'the foundations of electrical engineering'. There was also a move to revive the principle of combining instruction and education with socially useful labour (as far as this was consistent with the abilities of children). Both Marx and Engels had often spoken of labour not only as one of the needs of children and adolescents and as a form of recreation but also as a duty arising from the economic exigencies of society and the aims of all-round education. The principle had been vigorously supported by Lenin.¹

Naturally, both the educational system and production methods had changed since the time of Marx and Engels, and few organizations and enterprises were now able to consider employing children. Nevertheless, advanced teachers in the Soviet Union realized how important it was to establish a system of education under which pupils would not only be prepared for future life and work but would also be able to take part in socially useful activities that were consistent with their age and ability. The gradual involvement of schoolchildren in various forms of labour, the teachers felt, would have a number of advantages: first, tens of millions of pupils would between them produce a great deal in the course of their education; second, their experience would facilitate the transition from school to workplace; third, they would be equipped to make sensible decisions about appropriate careers to pursue in the future.

Between 1955 and 1957 thousands of schools experimented with methods of combining education with labour. The rural schools were particularly innovative: they re-established school orchards and kitchen gardens, studied the effects of crop rotation and mechanization on their own farms, bred poultry and livestock and manned machine/tractor stations. Workshops were attached to urban schools, often on the premises of local enterprises. These initiatives proved that it was indeed possible to combine instruction and education with productive labour, but they also revealed the problems associated with such an ambitious undertaking – there were too few experienced

teachers with the appropriate qualifications, for a start, and too little time for labour studies – so the period of secondary education was extended by one year, and fifty eleven-year secondary schools were established in which the extra time was to be devoted mainly to the organization of productive labour and training in production techniques. The experiment, initiated in 1957–8, proceeded smoothly, and in the spring of 1958 another 200 schools were included in the scheme. It was at this point that Khrushchev's memorandum was circulated.

The memorandum was quite blunt. It criticized the gulf that divided school from later life, the disparity between the objectives of the educational system and the needs of the economy and the one-sided orientation of the pupils towards higher education. It pointed out that of the school-leavers of 1954–7 as many as 2.5 million had failed to find places in technical colleges and institutions of higher education, and that in 1957 alone 800,000 had been unable to pursue their education beyond secondary level and only about 250,000 had gone straight from classroom to lecture hall. What was in store for those who had not made the grade, and what should be done to eradicate the shortcomings of the educational system? Khrushchev wrote:

Because the secondary school curriculum is divorced from life, these boys and girls know absolutely nothing about production. And because society does not know how to make the best use of their energy, both they and their parents are dissatisfied with the way things are. Furthermore, the situation is not improving but deteriorating as time goes by. I think there is every reason for us to be seriously concerned. . . . every child must prepare for useful work, for participation in the task of building a Communist society. And any work – in a factory, on a collective farm, in an industrial establishment, at a machine/tractor station, at a repair and service station or in an office – any honest, useful work for society is sacred work and essential for everyone who lives in and enjoys the benefits of society.²

Not content with this general exhortation, Khrushchev also presented the Central Committee with a detailed scheme for restructuring the educational system. Unfortunately, his proposals were informed neither by the findings of educational science nor by the large body of experience that Soviet schools had accumulated between 1953 and 1958. What inspired him, apparently, was his own recollection of the workers' faculties and technical colleges of the early 1920s, when the general secondary school still played an ancillary role.

At the primary level he proposed to replace the seven-year school with an obligatory eight-year one. This meant that it was the children at primary school, and not secondary schoolchildren who had a much heavier workload, who would benefit from an extra year. Moreover, he intended simply to abolish the general secondary school with which people were familiar:

In the towns, industrial centres and factory settlements, after seven or eight years of study children would perhaps have to enter schools on the factory and trade school model. They would go on with their studies, but these would be linked most closely with vocational training and would help them to acquire production knowledge and skills – not just a theoretical acquaintance with production but practical experience as well. In rural areas, after seven or eight years at school either pupils would receive practical and theoretical instruction in agronomy, live-stock breeding and other branches of agriculture, or they would be taught a trade for two or three years. . . .

We could also do this: complete the first stage of the secondary schooling of the pupils with the eight-year course so that after finishing it every boy and girl could take up a job in production. If we organized the general school in that way, we should be faced immediately with the task of finding work each year for between 2 and 3·5 million young people, of whom roughly 40 per cent would be in the towns and the rest in the countryside.³

Young people would be able to complete their secondary education, if they so wished, at night school or shift school. Khrushchev proposed that the period of instruction at night school be fixed at three or four years; that young people attending classes be allowed two or three days a week off from productive work; and that the ordinary general schools, to be retained 'in comparatively small numbers', should increase both the amount of time devoted to polytechnical education and the participation of pupils in productive labour.

Khrushchev's proposals, though broadly sound, were ill-judged in a number of respects. The most important of these were his under-estimation of the value of daytime general secondary schools, which were familiar to the people and were located close to centres of population, and his emphasis on the vocational training of children rather than the problems of polytechnical instruction and the involvement of pupils in productive labour. No youngster of 15 would be equipped to make a considered choice of occupation on leaving school, and in addition the options open to school-leavers would be limited to what was available in two or three local enterprises.

Nevertheless, progress with his scheme was rapid. In November 1958 the Central Committee published documents outlining the projected reorganization of schools, and in December, after a brief popular discussion of the issue, the proposed reforms became law. True, the terms of the new law, and especially the way in which it was implemented, differed considerably from what Khrushchev had originally proposed. The principal institution providing secondary education remained the daytime general and polytechnical school, to the curriculum of which was added training in production, which monopolized about one-third of the timetable in the ninth, tenth and eleventh forms. The reorganization of all secondary schools on this pattern was to be completed over a period of five years.

To Khrushchev this period seemed too long; in reality, however, it was not long enough. By the end of five years the deficiencies of the reform, which had been quite successful only in the best schools, had become abundantly clear. What made the secondary schools' situation still worse was Khrushchev's sudden decision – probably for reasons of economy – to reduce the instruction period from eleven years to ten, as he had originally proposed. This entailed fresh and complex changes in the curricula of secondary schools, and many of their achievements were rendered null and void.

The reorganization of the educational system received a great deal of publicity, but another important reform that was under way was not reported in the press. This was Khrushchev's reorganization of the State Security Committee. Strictly speaking, the structure and functions of this committee were left unchanged, but significant measures were taken to alter its composition. By a decision of the Presidium, Serov – whose devotion to Khrushchev had remained unquestioning – was released from his duties as chairman of the KGB. Like other leading officials who had worked in the organization long before, he had a damning record of participation in all kinds of illegal acts and serious state crimes, and he had been directly responsible for the deportation of several national communities from northern Caucasia. Now, after the Twentieth Congress and the return home of millions of rehabilitated citizens, it was impossible to overlook the past of the Minister in charge of the KGB.

It appears that the immediate pretext for removing Serov was the affair of the crown of the Queen of the Belgians. Having been stolen by the Nazis, it was presumed to be in Germany, somewhere in the Soviet zone, but all trace of it had been lost. After lengthy investigations it was discovered to be in the personal possession of Serov, who, it turned

out, kept it among a large number of other valuable objects he had acquired during his time as one of the heads of the wartime counter-intelligence organization 'Smersh'. Without any publicity the crown was returned to the Royal Court of Belgium. Despite this incident, Khrushchev did not undertake protracted inquiry into Serov's activities during Stalin's reign. He was not pensioned off or retired; he was appointed head of the GRU, the main intelligence directorate of the Soviet Army, an organization that worked in a number of areas in close contact with the KGB. Only much later, at the time of the exposure of Penkovsky, an Anglo-American spy who held a very high post in the Soviet apparatus and enjoyed Serov's protection, was he obliged to retire.

Unexpectedly, Khrushchev proposed as Serov's successor the First Secretary of the Central Committee of the Komsomol, A. N. Shelepin, a move that precipitated a thorough purge of the entire administration of the KGB and the removal of old cadres. Some officials were retired; others were transferred to more menial jobs in the personnel departments of institutions, in security work and in the management of small enterprises. The new cadres of the KGB were drawn partly from the Party organizations but also, and principally, from the Komsomol. The first secretaries of many oblast committees of the Komsomol were promoted to the leadership of the KGB administrations in their oblasts, as were many secretaries of Komsomol city committees. A large number of instructors and leading officials of the various departments of the Komsomol's Central Committee and Moscow Committee were given jobs as KGB investigators or heads of departments.

A purge of the KGB to eliminate those who had compromised themselves by participation in the crimes of Stalin and Beria was certainly long overdue, but the top stratum of the Komsomol leadership, formed at the end of the 1940s and the beginning of the 1950s (the last years of Stalin's reign), was itself open to criticism. As for Shelepin, he was an unprincipled careerist with immense political ambition. When he was still a 20-year-old student at the Moscow Institute of Philosophy and Literature, friends asked him what he wanted to become. He replied without hesitation: 'A chief.'

In some ways the spring and summer of 1959 formed the most tranquil half-year of Khrushchev's life. The barns were full, and the procurement of meat and milk had gone well. The international situation was comparatively quiet. Khrushchev spent his sixty-fifth birthday with his family at Yalta. Greetings to him from the Central Committee and from the leaders of all the socialist countries and

Communist Parties were published in the press, and the leaders of some capitalist countries also sent their congratulations. He did not return to Moscow until the end of April. In accordance with established tradition, it was at the end of April each year that the World Peace Council awarded the Lenin Peace Prizes. One of the five prizes awarded in 1959 went to Khrushchev.

On his return to Moscow, Khrushchev received a large group of editors of Social Democratic newspapers in the Federal Republic of Germany. He regarded very seriously the possibility of united action with the Social Democrats in connection with several international issues. A group of American ex-servicemen also visited the USSR and were warmly received by Khrushchev at the Kremlin.

In the middle of May the Third Congress of Soviet Writers assembled in the capital. Khrushchev told the gathering frankly that he had been very worried because he had decided to speak without notes, and that was 'a tough job for any speaker'. He also declared that he did not propose to teach the writers and poets their business, especially as in recent years he had read very few novels and stories. 'It has been my lot, rather,' he said, 'to read messages from ambassadors, notes from Foreign Ministers and reports of speeches by the President of the USA or the head of some other Government.'

The statement was disingenuous, since the Congress was held in the shadow of a discreditable affair – the persecution of Boris Pasternak. Eight months before, in the first half of October 1958, the Nobel Prize for Literature had been awarded to Pasternak for his novel *Dr Zhivago*. The novel had been written much earlier and offered for publication to the journal *Novy Mir*. Its theme – the fate of a man who has lost his bearings amid the events of the Revolution and is unable to decide where he stands in the conditions of the civil war – was not a new one in Soviet literature. (It is enough to recall, for example, Sholokhov's *And Quiet Flows the Don*.) Among the members of the editorial board of *Novy Mir*, which at that time was headed by Simonov, opinions about the novel were divided, but eventually the decision was taken to reject it.

Pasternak sent the manuscript of *Dr Zhivago* to an Italian publisher, and in 1957 the novel was published abroad and soon translated into several languages. At the time the Soviet press said nothing about what had happened, but it could not remain silent about the award of the Nobel Prize. *Pravda* published a lengthy article by D. Zaslavsky under the heading: 'Noisy reactionary propaganda about a literary weed'. Zaslavsky wrote that Pasternak had never been a truly Soviet writer

and even in his 'best period' had not been 'included among craftsmen of the first rank'. He described Pasternak's novel as a 'political lampoon' that had nothing in common with literature and the hero of the novel as a 'moral freak'.

The officially backed campaign against Pasternak was waged mainly through the writers' organizations. At the First Congress of Writers of the RSFSR, for example, which was held in Moscow with a view to establishing an RSFSR Writers' Union, the chief speaker was Sobolev: he denounced Pasternak as a 'representative of the decadent intelligentsia', a 'colleague of all cold cynics' and even a 'traitor'. These crude and unjust accusations were supported by many of those who were attending the Congress. Khrushchev voiced no personal opinions about Pasternak's novel, but it was no secret that the entire campaign was conducted with his consent. He did not actually read *Dr Zhivago* until 1965: he was familiar only with certain tendentious quotations, isolated from their context, that had been placed on his desk. What dismayed him was the fact that a novel that had been rejected in the Soviet Union had been published abroad. The leaders of the Komsomol also supported the anti-Pasternak campaign. The First Secretary of the Central Committee of the Komsomol, V. E. Semichastny, speaking at a plenum of that body, described Pasternak as an 'internal émigré' and said that it would be a good thing if he would 'actually become an émigré and leave for his capitalist paradise'. The great Russian poet was expelled from the Writers' Union.

The whole campaign was an indication of the difficulties faced by literature and culture in the Soviet Union. Afraid of what might happen to him, Pasternak was obliged to announce that he refused to accept the Nobel Prize and that he did not wish to leave his country in any circumstances. Both the noisy campaign against *Dr Zhivago* and the award of the Nobel Prize brought him the international fame that had long been his due, but he was deeply affected by the baseless slanders that were heaped upon him, and his health suffered. In May 1960 he died at his house in the Peredelkino settlement near Moscow.

At the Third Congress of Soviet Writers in May 1959 Khrushchev showed some restraint. He did not hesitate to condemn both the 'denigrators' of Soviet society and the 'embellishers', but he mentioned no names. He said nothing about the Pasternak affair, which had already provoked such a disapproving reaction abroad. Before the Congress opened, Khrushchev asked Tvardovsky whether Pasternak really was a great poet. Tvardovsky asked him in return: 'Do you consider me a poet?' Khrushchev answered that he was very fond of

Tvardovsky's poems. 'Well, by comparison with Pasternak, I'm no great poet,' answered Alexander Trifonovich.

Contrary to the evidence, Khrushchev loved literature, and especially poetry, but his taste had been formed when he was young, and it had not been honed since. His favourite poet was Nekrasov, whom he always singled out from among the great nineteenth-century Russian poets, although he also knew Pushkin and Lermontov well. He used to say from time to time:

What does Pushkin write about the autumn?

Despondent time! Bewitching eyes!
I love your departing beauty. . . .

What good are 'bewitching eyes' if the cold weather is on the way and the peasant has no clothes or boots, if the harvest is not too good and all that lies ahead is a stern, harsh winter? But this is what Nekrasov says:

Late autumn. The rooks have flown.
The woods are bare, the fields deserted.
One strip alone has not been harvested,
And that gives rise to thoughts of pity.

And when he was in the mood he would read Nekrasov's poems aloud for hours on end. It is understandable that he should have liked Tvardovsky above all other Soviet poets.

The Government continued to suffer from an acute shortage of money. A fundamental solution to the problem, in Khrushchev's view, was to cut the armed forces, which he believed to be larger than was necessary in peace time. At the end of 1959, therefore, at a session of the Central Committee's Presidium, he advocated their reduction by one-third, justifying his proposal by reference to the 'warmer' international climate and the improved technical equipment of the Army. It was the second such measure in two years: in January 1958 a decision had been taken to reduce the armed forces of the Soviet Union by 300,000 men, so between the end of 1954 and the beginning of 1958 they had been shorn of more than 2 million men. Khrushchev's proposals engendered deep resentment in service circles, and the reception they were accorded was cool, to say the least. He was not discouraged by the opposition of the military leadership, however, and in mid-January 1960 a special session of the Supreme Soviet sanctioned the cuts, which reduced the establishment of the Soviet Army and Navy to 2,400,000 men. The first discharges from the Army began

soon after and the discontent that had been evident among a section of the commanders intensified. A large group of generals and marshals addressed a letter to the Central Committee in which they stated that if such extensive cuts were made in the Army, the security of the Soviet Union could not be guaranteed. This was a serious move and one that Khrushchev could not ignore.

Dissatisfaction was also rife among the officer corps of the militia because Khrushchev was proposing to abolish the all-Union Ministry of Internal Affairs and to assign its duties to the Ministries of Internal Affairs of the Republics, which would be known thenceforth as Ministries for the Safeguarding of Public Order. Furthermore, under Khrushchev's scheme the officers of the militia and the MVD organs were to be deprived of certain privileges in respect of pay: Khrushchev said in an interview that the militia officers were not military men in the full sense of the word, that they lived in towns with their families and could well be deprived of certain privileges, which should be reserved for officers of the armed forces. He considered that under Stalin sections of the MVD had acquired excessive privileges and that it was necessary to rely more upon the help of the public in combating crime.

These decisions were altogether too hasty. Many of the militia's activities required direction on an all-Union scale, since criminals could move easily from one Republic to another. Furthermore, although the militia did not bear the same burdens as the Army and Navy, its work was complex and sometimes dangerous. There were no justifiable grounds for reducing the pay and pensions of its officers. As for the rank and file, their pay was very low, and few young people were attracted to the militia.

Something must be said here about a matter to which Khrushchev himself referred, unexpectedly, during a speech that he delivered to India's Parliament during his visit in February 1960. He affirmed that in recent years there had been no political prosecutions in the USSR. This statement was less than accurate. The number of people arrested and sentenced for political reasons in 1955-60 was not high, but there had been such cases. After the Hungarian events of 1956 student groups had been formed that expressed their sympathy with the Hungarian rebels and condemned the Soviet armed intervention. They had organized a series of speeches at Komsomol meetings at Moscow State University and had distributed leaflets. A group led by Yu. Mashkov and V. Tsekhmister, who adhered to the 'Yugoslav tendency', had been arrested. Poetry readings at Mayakovsky's

monument in Moscow, which had gradually assumed an organized and seditious character, had been attended by V. Bukovsky, E. Kuznetsov, V. Osipov and A. Ginzburg, among others. One of the participants, I. Bokshstein, had been arrested, and the meetings themselves had been disrupted by volunteer patrols. People had been arrested for 'nationalism' in certain Republics, and in some oblasts there were those who had been charged with criticizing the Khrushchev cult. In Mordovia, in Corrective Labour Colony No. 7, several hundred people who had been sentenced for political reasons were still being held in detention in 1960.

Of course, these acts of repression cannot be compared with those of the Stalin years. The groups of 'dissidents' that appeared at the beginning of the 1960s were conspiratorial in nature; they did not seek publicity and did not endeavour to make contact with foreign correspondents – indeed, the foreign correspondents knew nothing of their existence. At that time no groups of friends and sympathizers assembled near the courthouses. In other words, although there were political prisoners, there was no 'dissident movement'. After 1956 the regime in the corrective labour camps eased considerably, both for criminal and for political prisoners, which provoked so many protests from officials of the MVD that at one session of the Supreme Soviet the Government was criticized for establishing 'health-resort conditions' in the camps. Khrushchev noted, predictably, that these words met with general applause from the deputies present. Susceptible as he was to sudden changes of mood, he ordered harsher restrictions to be imposed in the camps. An article was inserted in the Criminal Code that provided for punishment, even by shooting, 'for outrages on the part of prisoners, for intimidating those who have responded to correction, or for disorganizing the activity of the administration'.

His concern to husband the state's money also impelled Khrushchev to take certain other precipitate actions. After two visits to the Soviet Far East and Siberia, for example, he proposed to abolish the many supplementary payments that had formerly been awarded to workers employed in those parts, a measure that prompted a population drift from the east to the European part of the Soviet Union. Life in the east was somewhat easier than it had been before the war, but it was still harsh.

At the beginning of May 1960 a Central Committee plenum was held that resulted in changes in the Party's leadership. Kosygin, Podgorny and Polyansky, formerly candidates for membership of the Central Committee, now became full members. On the other hand,

Kirichenko lost his position in the Presidium and the Secretariat. He had joined the Presidium in 1955 and had been active in support of Khrushchev during its debates. Although he was a boor, he had at that time enjoyed Khrushchev's complete confidence and favour. When Khrushchev was obliged to be absent from Moscow for long periods, one of his closest colleagues would preside over the meetings of the Presidium and the Secretariat in his place, and in 1959 this was usually Kirichenko. Apparently, Kirichenko was made to bear responsibility for the agricultural failures of 1959. He was deprived of his posts in Party and state and made manager of a small enterprise first in Penza oblast and later in Rostov oblast. He was replaced as Secretary of the Central Committee by Kozlov, who also retained his position as Vice-Chairman of the Council of Ministers. He was a man who resembled Kirichenko in many ways, though he too constantly demonstrated his devotion to Khrushchev. When Kozlov headed the Party organization in Leningrad a special delegation came from Leningrad to ask Khrushchev not to recommend Kozlov to the oblast Party conference as secretary of the obkom. Despite this, Khrushchev took Kozlov under his protection and paid little attention to the serious allegations made against him.

Another man was removed from the Presidium: N. I. Belyayev, who between 1957 and 1960 had headed the Party organization in Kazakhstan. Khrushchev was extremely dissatisfied with the state of affairs in the virgin lands. The grain harvest had declined there, despite the cultivation of new land. Belyayev was replaced as First Secretary of the Central Committee of Kazakhstan by D. Kunayev. At the session of the Supreme Soviet that was held soon after this Voroshilov was honourably retired on pension. His place as Chairman of the Presidium was taken by Brezhnev.

Other changes were afoot. The Supreme Soviet abolished both income tax and 'single-person' tax for all citizens with incomes below 500 roubles per month. The abolition of taxes on all wages and earnings below 2,000 roubles per month was to be effected by 1965. A decree was also adopted that provided for the completion in 1960 of the transition to the seven-hour working day (six hours for workers underground). One other decree proved highly unpopular. This was the reduction of all prices, payments and wages by a factor of 10. Formally speaking, no one suffered as a result of this change – neither the state nor the citizens. On the contrary, expenditure on the manufacture of currency was reduced by one-third; the use of automatic vending machines was facilitated; and expenses were reduced.

Nevertheless, the people did not like any kind of currency reform; moreover, the automatic reduction in prices in the state shops was not matched by a similar reduction in prices of goods in the collective farm markets or in the prices of personal services. There had never been enough money and now, it seemed, there was even less than before.

Yet certain projects that were dear to Khrushchev proceeded. Along with other Central Committee members, in July Khrushchev inspected the construction of experimental houses at Usovo and work on the Moscow ring-road. It was decided to transfer to the jurisdiction of the Moscow gorispolkom such neighbouring towns as Tushino, Perovo and Babushkin and henceforth to treat the circular motorway as the boundary of the city.

At the end of that month Khrushchev went to Yalta for a holiday, where he stayed until the end of August. Since Stalin's time most of the state dachas in the Crimea had been situated in the former palaces of the Tsar or of the Tsarist nobility. Khrushchev did not like this expedient: besides, it was contrary to Lenin's prescription that all the properties of the Imperial family in the Crimea should be converted into sanatoria and rest-homes for working people. On his initiative all the former palaces ceased to be state dachas, and museums were established in them instead. Not far from the former Tsarist properties pieces of land were set aside for the building of new state dachas, and a large dacha was soon constructed at a spot some 20 kilometres from Gagri, on Cape Pitsunda. A concrete wall about 2 kilometres long separated a stretch of the beach and part of an ancient pinewood from the land on which a health resort had been built some years before. That dacha became Khrushchev's favourite holiday resort.

‘The Peoples Demand Détente’

In the first half of 1958 Khrushchev was concerned mainly with foreign policy. In January, in a speech delivered in Minsk, he expressed his readiness to attempt to improve relations with the Western countries. A statement appeared in the central newspapers: ‘The peoples demand détente.’ During January and February there was a brisk exchange of messages between the Soviet Government and the Governments of the West. The Soviet Union proposed bans on atomic bomb tests and on the use of space for military purposes, a non-aggression treaty, an agreement to make Central Europe a zone free from all forms of atomic weapons or rockets and a reduction in the armed forces of both West and East Germany. Nothing concrete came of this campaign, however, apart from the signing of an agreement to increase technological and economic exchanges with West Germany.

Meanwhile, though, relations with some of the socialist countries had improved. At the head of a delegation Khrushchev made lengthy visits to Hungary, Bulgaria and the German Democratic Republic. In the summer of 1958 the President of Czechoslovakia, A. Novotny, visited the Soviet Union, and Khrushchev led a delegation to the congress of the Socialist Unity Party in Berlin. Yugoslavia was impervious to overtures, however. A ‘Draft Programme of the League of Communists of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia’ was published in Belgrade, which Soviet ideologists declared to be a ‘revisionist’ document. A number of articles from the Chinese press, which contained particularly sharp thrusts at Yugoslavia, were reproduced in the Soviet papers. Speaking in Bulgaria, Khrushchev referred to Yugoslavia as a Trojan horse in the international Communist movement. The visit that Voroshilov was to have made to Yugoslavia was cancelled, and Khrushchev and he merely sent Tito a telegram of congratulations on his birthday.

The deterioration of inter-Party relations affected relations at inter-state level. Khrushchev even halted the shipment of wheat to Yugoslavia, despite the agreements that had been signed. He was

obviously irritated. He had sincerely thought that since Yugoslavia was a socialist country, she would surely return to the socialist camp. But that course was unacceptable to Tito. Having escaped Stalin's dominance, he did not want to return to that of the Soviet Union, even if this were now to be more flexible and less all-embracing. Yugoslavia had attained complete independence in the formulation of her policy, both foreign and domestic, and Tito wanted to develop parallel relations with West and East. It was at this time that the non-aligned countries, headed by Tito, Nehru and Sukarno, formally declared their political independence.

Khrushchev was annoyed by Tito's intractability, and suddenly, in May 1958, the Soviet Union deferred for six or seven years the granting of credits to Yugoslavia on which agreement had been reached in 1956. These credits had been extended on favourable terms, much better than those offered to Yugoslavia by her Western creditors. In 1956 the Soviet Union had had no surplus capital, so the credits had been a concession to Yugoslavia. In 1958 Khrushchev considered them to have been excessive, and he cancelled the credits without bothering to give much explanation. From the legal standpoint, he was in the wrong, for the agreement had been signed and Yugoslavia had already begun work on the chemical plant for which the Soviet credits had been earmarked.

Relations with Egypt were cordial. In January a delegation from the United Arab Republic (at that time Egypt and Syria formed a single state) visited the Soviet Union, and the two states signed an agreement over future co-operation. At the end of April Moscow gave a ceremonial welcome to President Nasser, who toured the Soviet Union for two weeks. An economic and military-political alliance began to take shape between the two states, and Khrushchev attached very great importance to it. Several hundred Soviet specialists were sent to Cairo to assist with the formation of a strong, modern army and with the development of industry.

In the summer of 1958 the situation in the Middle East became strained. In Iraq the pro-British regime of Nuri es-Said was overthrown, and the rule of King Hussein of Jordan was threatened. The Christian President of Lebanon, Chamoun, also feared for the survival of his Government. At his request, American troops landed in Lebanon, which caused alarm in several Arab countries. There was a sharp exchange of diplomatic notes between the Soviet Union and the United States. Nasser flew to Moscow for a brief working visit; it was not difficult to guess that his purpose was to seek direct support for the

UAR. But the West was not anxious to see Soviet troops appearing in, say, Syria, and shortly afterwards the United States withdrew her forces from Lebanon.

In promoting his foreign policy Khrushchev considered it important to set out the views of the Soviet Government both in diplomatic notes and in the press. He was very aware of the significance of the press, especially in Western countries, and he arranged to meet many journalists as well as heads of Governments and diplomats. In the first months of 1958 he met and gave detailed interviews to the German publisher Axel Springer and the editor of the newspaper *Die Welt*, Hans Zehrer; the foreign editor of *The Times*, Iverach McDonald; and the correspondent of the Mexican newspaper *Excelsior*, Manuel Mejido. He also received a group of correspondents of the Polish newspaper *Trybuna Ludu*; the correspondent of the French newspaper *Le Figaro*, Serge Groussard; the representatives of the American *Journal of Commerce*, Eric Ridder and Heinz Luedicke; the correspondent of the Italian newspaper *Il Tempo*, Giuseppe Palozzi; the Greek newspaper publisher Christos Lambrakis; and the correspondent of the *Melbourne Herald*, John Waters. Khrushchev met representatives of both the democratic and the right-wing press, including Randolph Hearst, the head of the American newspaper corporation, whose name had become synonymous in the Soviet Union with the reactionary 'yellow' press. His long talks with journalists were usually published, after mutual agreement on the texts, both in the journalists' own countries and in the Soviet Union. The texts testified to his adroit handling both of the interviewers and of their questions, which he often side-stepped extremely nimbly. He came to know the Moscow correspondents of many leading Western newspapers quite well, and would often address them by name at press conferences.

During 1958, unnoticed by outside observers, the gulf between the Soviet Union and China widened. Apart from the Chinese leaders' disapproval of Khrushchev's exposure of Stalin, certain ideological differences had appeared at the recent conferences of Communist Parties. In particular, Mao regarded Khrushchev's optimism about the possibility of averting a third world war as misguided. The first manifestations of the notorious 'Great Leap Forward' in China gave rise to a multitude of new requests from China, to which the Soviet Union did not immediately respond. In private, Khrushchev also spoke very sceptically about the establishment in China of the system of 'people's communes', claiming that this was an outdated idea.

Relations between the People's Republic of China and the Chinese

Nationalist Government on Taiwan had never been neighbourly, but it is possible that fresh trouble was fomented at that time partly to distract attention from the failures of the 'Great Leap Forward'. The conflict arose over some islands in the Formosa Strait that were under the control of Taiwan, although they were quite close to the Chinese mainland. Chinese artillery began to bombard the islands, and troops were assembled on the coast facing them, so that it seemed there might be an attempt to seize the islands. In order to demonstrate the United States' support for Taiwan, the American Navy took the Formosa Strait under its protection, and American ships and aircraft began constantly and provocatively to violate China's maritime frontier and airspace. Peking gave the United States her first 'grave warning': the number of these warnings was soon to be counted in tens and then in hundreds. Setting differences aside, Khrushchev paid a three-day visit to China, where he met and talked with Mao Tse-tung on several occasions. It later became known that it was during this visit that China pressed for the construction of a Chinese nuclear missile to be accelerated. The Soviet Union was not disposed to increase her aid to China for this purpose, however, and Khrushchev merely promised that in the event of a serious conflict with the United States he could guarantee China the full support of the Soviet Union.

The next year, was an extremely demanding one for Khrushchev. In the early spring, at the invitation of the Government of the German Democratic Republic, he attended the opening of the Leipzig Trade Fair and spent a week touring the country. Speeches and interviews by him appeared in the press almost daily – certainly not less than three times a week. Many of his speeches were improvised, and editors often had considerable difficulty in preparing them for publication. The long and interesting speech that he delivered at an all-Germany workers' conference in Leipzig on 7 March, for instance, was not published in *Pravda* until 27 March.

After he had received at the Kremlin both the British Prime Minister, Harold Macmillan, and the General Secretary of the United Nations, Dag Hammarskjöld, at the end of May he visited Albania at the head of a Party and Government delegation. Reports of this visit and of the speeches made by Khrushchev and by Enver Hoxha were published in the Soviet papers under the headline 'Eternal friendship'. This was a naive description of Soviet–Albanian relations, which were fraught with complexity. During Stalin's lifetime savage reprisals against Party cadres had been initiated in Albania. Many outstanding leaders of the country and the Party had been killed after being accused of sympathiz-

ing with Yugoslavia or of opposing the leadership of Enver Hoxha and Mehmet Shehu. The restoration of normal relations between the USSR and Yugoslavia, and particularly the exposure of Stalin's crimes, had placed Albanian leaders in an awkward position. They wished neither to rehabilitate former 'criminals' in their own country nor to normalize relations with Yugoslavia. However, among the leadership of the Albanian Party of Labour, both in the Central Committee and in the Politburo, opposition arose to Enver Hoxha's group, which demanded changes in Party policy and the rehabilitation of Communists who had been liquidated. Some members of the opposition travelled to Moscow to tell the Soviet leaders of the intolerable situation in Albania, but Khrushchev and the Central Committee could not intervene directly.

Meanwhile, fresh purges began in Albania: a Politburo member, Liri Gega, was arrested, together with Liri Belishova and Kochko Tashko of the Central Committee. Despite Khrushchev's personal appeal to Hoxha, Liri Gega and her husband were shot, although she was pregnant. Less than two years after Khrushchev's visit, Albania broke off relations with the Soviet Union and became one of the most savage critics of the Soviet Communist Party and of Khrushchev personally.

Khrushchev had become increasingly concerned about the Soviet Union's relations with the United States, and he anxiously sought ways to promote détente. The year before, in September 1958, he had given a warm welcome to Cyrus Eaton, the American industrialist, financier and public figure who was known for his eagerness to foster more cordial relations between the Soviet Union and the United States. It was he who initiated the regular meetings of scientists and public men that came to be known, after the place where they were first held, as the 'Pugwash Movement'. Strolling around the Kremlin among the tourists, he was surprised by Khrushchev's relaxed relationship with his people, many of whom greeted him. (Khrushchev never failed to capitalize on such opportunities: on one occasion, when he had taken Tito to a café for ice-cream and coffee, he found that neither he nor his guest had any money; one of the guards obliged with a loan of 10 roubles. For a politician, of course, life is politics: Khrushchev wanted to demonstrate to his guests the unity that existed between the people and the Party leadership.) In December 1958 he had held talks with Senator Hubert Humphrey, and at the beginning of 1959 his deputy in the Council of Ministers, Mikoyan, had flown to America to meet Eisenhower and Dulles. They had discussed the German question, Berlin, disarmament, a ban on atom-bomb tests, American-Soviet

trade – and the possibility of arranging visits by Khrushchev to the United States and by President Eisenhower to the Soviet Union.

Early in 1959 plans were made to hold a Soviet exhibition in New York and an American exhibition in Moscow. The building of pavilions and the preparation of exhibits began at once. The Soviet exhibition opened in June 1959 and was visited by hundreds of thousands of Americans. At the end of July the American stand in Moscow's Sokolniki Park was ready. Vice-President Nixon flew to Moscow for the official opening, before which Khrushchev and a group of Soviet leaders toured the exhibits. A standard American one-family house attracted Khrushchev's attention: he disliked it because of its insubstantiality; it was made of plywood and was designed to last no more than twenty or twenty-five years. 'We must build houses', he said, 'so that they can be lived in by our children and grandchildren.' 'But our children and grandchildren may have tastes and needs that are different from ours,' Nixon replied. 'Well, let them change the furniture,' said Khrushchev. 'Why change the house?'

This exchange, which took place in the kitchen of the American house, was only superficially concerned with the durability of construction materials: what the two men were discussing was various aspects of American-Soviet relations. Heated by the dispute, Khrushchev said that if the United States tried to test the resolution of the USSR, '*My pokazhem vam kuz'kinu mat'*' (a popular expression meaning something like 'We'll teach you a lesson'). The American interpreter was stumped and translated this as 'We'll show you Kuzma's mother.' Naturally, Nixon could not make head or tail of this, and the Soviet interpreters had to supply a more comprehensible translation. The incident later became the subject of countless jokes and anecdotes.

At the official opening of the exhibition Nixon made a speech extolling the American way of life, the material security of Americans and the wealth of the average American family. He also mentioned freedom of speech, the press, travel and so on. On Khrushchev's orders, the speech was published in full in the Soviet press. Nixon stayed on in Moscow for a few more days. On one occasion, when he and his host were strolling among holidaymakers on the banks of the Moscow river, Khrushchev chatted informally with the sunbathers and asked his guest: 'Do these people seem to you like slaves of Communism?'

On 4 July 1959 it was announced that Khrushchev would visit the United States in September 'to get to know the country and its people'

and that President Eisenhower would return the visit later in the autumn. The visits were to be official ones, but there was no question of the signing of any treaty.

On 13 September a Soviet rocket, *Lunik II*, reached the Moon and planted a Soviet pennant on its surface. Two days later *Pravda* carried a drawing showing, against a background of a Moon rocket and the nuclear-powered icebreaker *Lenin*, a TU-114 plane with 'Moscow—Washington' on its side and the headline 'Today N. S. Khrushchev is setting off on a visit to the USA.'

That visit was truly historic. It was the first visit by a head of the Soviet Government and the Party to the United States, and it also reflected some of the distinctive features of Khrushchev's personality. The United States had seen many heads of state and Government, but Khrushchev's two-week visit is still remembered by the older generation of Americans and Soviet people. For a fortnight the attention of the USA, the USSR and the whole world was focused exclusively on the head of the Soviet state. Khrushchev stood up to the scrutiny well. Although after his visit neither the membership nor the influence of the Communist Party of the USA increased, his popularity soared almost everywhere in the world. The Americans liked his directness, energy, industry, resourcefulness, rough humour and simplicity, and on no occasion was his composure ruffled.

Khrushchev's visit began on 15 September. He was accompanied by his wife, Nina Petrovna, and certain other members of his family, by Gromyko and his wife and by V. P. Yelyutin, the Minister of Secondary and Higher Specialized Education. The Soviet delegation also included the chairman of the Dnepropetrovsk Sovnarkhoz, N. A. Tikhonov; the chairman of the Commission on the Peaceful Use of Atomic Power, Y. S. Yemelyanov; and the writer, M. A. Sholokhov. The designer of the TU-114 aircraft in which they travelled, A. N. Tupolev, declined to go with them on grounds of ill-health, but his son deputized for him. The party was completed by a large group of journalists and some diplomats.

Khrushchev was met by President Eisenhower and the new Secretary of State, Christian Herter (Dulles had died in May of that year). From the Air Force base the two leaders drove in an open car to Washington and, after taking a short rest at Blair House, where the President's guests usually stayed, Khrushchev went on to the White House to attend a luncheon that had been arranged in his honour. After that he and the President had their first talk together — not a long one because by then Khrushchev's day had already lasted thirty-two hours.

He was the host at luncheon at his own residence the next day, when he and the President talked again. The subjects they covered included disarmament, Germany, West Berlin and the expansion of Soviet-American trade. Although their views did not coincide, both agreed that it was essential to pursue a policy of *détente* and to forget the cold war.

That same day Khrushchev toured Washington briefly and visited Congress, where he talked with a group of senators headed by Senator Fulbright and a future President, Lyndon Johnson. Among them was Senator John F. Kennedy, that energetic Congressman whom Khrushchev was to remember. The main event of the day was Khrushchev's speech to leading American journalists at the Washington Press Club. After his speech he answered questions, some of them plainly not to his liking, but he showed himself to be a good polemicist: 'If you are going to throw dead rats at me,' he said, rather coarsely, 'I can throw quite a few dead cats at you.' This encounter with the press was relayed by television across the entire country.

Later that evening Khrushchev went to New York, where he spent two extremely busy days. The first reception, given by the city's mayor, Robert F. Wagner, was a great gathering of the elite of New York — about two thousand people in all. A smaller reception followed, at which Averell Harriman was Khrushchev's host. That evening Khrushchev attended a dinner given in his honour by the Economic Club of New York. As one of the American papers remarked, this was 'the biggest gathering of prominent businessmen ever to have assembled under one roof'. The dinner was followed by a speech and questions. The next day he toured New York: he visited President Roosevelt's widow, viewed the Roosevelt house museum and laid a wreath on Roosevelt's tomb. Then he went to the United Nations headquarters, where the autumn session of the General Assembly was meeting. Before the representatives of eighty countries Khrushchev gave a speech about the difficulties raised by a stage-by-stage reduction of armaments, disarmament and other topical problems, including the representation of the Chinese People's Republic in the United Nations and the conclusion of a peace with Germany.

On 19 and 20 September Khrushchev was in California, where he visited Los Angeles and San Francisco. He went to Hollywood, where Twentieth Century-Fox had organized a large reception in his honour. He inspected a factory at which calculating machines were manufactured in San José and visited a self-service store and a self-service restaurant (these became widespread in the Soviet Union soon after).

He spent three hours in rather heated discussion with leaders of American trade unions headed by Walter Reuther, vice-president of the AFL-CIO and then strolled about San Francisco. The next day was devoted to meetings and a trip around the Bay.

A brief look at American farming in Iowa occupied 22 and 23 September. In Des Moines, the state capital, Khrushchev inspected an agricultural machinery works, a meat-packing factory and the Chamber of Commerce. He renewed his friendship with Roswell Garst, from whom the USSR had bought hybrid maize seeds. (On Garst's farm a group of Soviet combine operators had learned how to cultivate maize without resorting to manual labour.) This trip ended when Khrushchev flew to Pittsburg to tour the Mesta engineering works.

He returned to Washington on 24 September to hold a reception at the Soviet Embassy. The next day was devoted to talks with President Eisenhower at Camp David, the President's country residence, and discussions continued until 27 September. The two men were generally alone except for interpreters. Khrushchev also visited the President's nearby farm and met his family. His speech on 27 September, which was broadcast on all the American television channels, marked the end of his visit.

The only rest he had was on the aeroplane, for almost immediately after his arrival in Moscow a huge meeting was held in the Palace of Sport, at which he spoke briefly about his American visit. Next day he boarded another aircraft to fly east for the tenth anniversary celebrations of the Chinese People's Republic.

In Peking on 29 September he received a polite but chilly welcome from Mao Tse-tung and Liu Shao-chi. The Soviet delegation had arrived a few days before. Because the Chinese population had not been informed of the visit, there were no welcoming crowds – in striking contrast to his experiences in the United States. The situation in China was becoming more and more complicated, and relations between the two countries were increasingly difficult. Because China's relations with the United States were also very strained, the Chinese leaders were displeased with Khrushchev's visit to the USA and his attempt to promote détente. Considerable friction had also arisen between the Chinese authorities and the Soviet specialists, who objected to a number of measures that had been adopted in the interests of the 'Great Leap Forward'. It had been hoped that Khrushchev's visit would help to solve a number of problems, but his first meeting with Mao was neither very long nor very cordial. The Chinese leader obviously wished to avoid serious negotiations and

gave the excuse that he was busy. Khrushchev decided not to linger and left China after a few days. It was his last visit to the country and his last meeting with Mao.

On the way home he spent two days in Vladivostok and addressed a big meeting there. Other meetings followed in the main squares of Irkutsk, Krasnoyarsk and Novosibirsk. He also visited the hydro-electric power station at Bratsk and the site of the Siberian branch of the USSR Academy of Sciences, which was being constructed near Novosibirsk.

He returned to Moscow on 10 October and resumed work immediately. One after another he received his deputies in the Council of Ministers, the secretaries of the Central Committee and secretaries of certain obkoms and Sovnarkhozes. A Government delegation arrived from Austria and another from Bulgaria's Agricultural Union. He was exhausted, however, and he accepted an invitation from Romania to spend the rest of October on holiday beside the Black Sea.

The next year was also a taxing one. Early in February Khrushchev began an official visit to Indonesia. En route he spent four days in India, where he had two meetings with Nehru, visited several cities and saw the steelworks at Bhilai that was being built with Soviet help. He also signed a new agreement on economic and cultural co-operation. After a brief visit to Burma, he arrived in Djakarta, the Indonesian capital, where he was ceremonially welcomed by the people and the President. He toured the principal regions of this remarkable but poverty-stricken country that had only recently won its independence. His travels in the East Indies lasted ten days and culminated in the signing of another agreement for economic and cultural co-operation. After this he flew to Afghanistan for a few days and returned to Moscow on 5 March.

He spent only a short time dealing with business in Moscow, for on 23 March he began a visit to France that attracted the attention if not of the whole world, then at least of all Europe. At that time General de Gaulle was waging a fierce battle against right-wing groups that were opposed to his policy of making peace in Algeria, a circumstance that helped to foster warmer Franco-Soviet relations. Khrushchev's visit was intended to consolidate détente with France.

The Soviet leader spent three days in Paris, during which he looked round the city, spoke at the Paris City Hall, the French Chamber of Commerce and the Diplomatic Press Association, and held a press conference. Then he toured the country, visiting Marseilles, Bordeaux, Nîmes, Arles, Dijon, Metz, Verdun, Rheims, Lille, Roubaix and

Rouen. In some of these towns he spent only a few hours, but everywhere he was greeted by huge crowds of people, who had sometimes waited a long time to see the visitor. France was a country with both powerful left-wing parties and active right-wing groups. The latter tried in some places to tear down the posters and flags that had been put up to welcome Khrushchev, and in clashes between the factions here and there one worker was killed and several injured. In the Avenue des Champs Elysées, along which Khrushchev and de Gaulle were driven, the police arrested a barman under whose bar a gun and some bombs were found. The remaining two days of the visit were devoted to talks with the French President, meetings with leaders of French trade unions, speeches on television, a visit to the Renault factory and a performance of *Carmen* at the Opéra. After a final press conference Khrushchev returned to Moscow on 3 April.

The improvement in Soviet-American relations in 1959 had led to general détente between the USSR and Western countries. A meeting of the heads of the Governments of France, the USSR, the USA and Britain had been arranged for 16 May 1960 in order to continue discussion of problems arising from the meeting of the great powers in Geneva in 1955, but it never took place.

On May Day 1960 an American spy-plane crossed the southern frontier of the Soviet Union and flew across the country at a height of 20 kilometres until it was brought down by a rocket near Sverdlovsk. Similar flights, sometimes over Moscow and Leningrad, had been going on since Stalin's time. The Soviet press had not reported these invasions of airspace because the USSR had no means of preventing them. The best Soviet fighter planes could fly no higher than 16 kilometres, and anti-aircraft guns were unable to challenge aircraft at greater heights. Military specialists had told Stalin that the best way to stop the American flights would be to create special ground-to-air anti-aircraft missiles. In part, this was why the USSR had accorded priority to the building of rockets, with the result that in 1960 reasonably accurate anti-aircraft missiles had been added to the Soviet arsenal.

Khrushchev reported the incident on 5 May at a session of the Supreme Soviet, deliberately not naming the area in which the plane had been brought down and saying nothing about the fact that the pilot had been taken alive and unharmed. Presuming that the aircraft had been destroyed and its pilot killed, the US State Department issued a statement in which it claimed that the aircraft had been investigating meteorological conditions in the upper atmosphere over Turkey and

Iran and had crossed the Soviet frontier accidentally. Khrushchev then announced that the aircraft had been brought down near Sverdlovsk, that the pilot had survived and had given the Soviet authorities the information they needed and that amid the débris of the aircraft they had found film that recorded details of Soviet airfields and other military installations. The Soviet Government sent a formal protest to the US Government, but the Americans did not offer even formal apologies to the Soviet Union. Secretary of State Herter even tried to justify the flights by reference to 'the excessive secrecy of the USSR'.

Only a few days were left before the summit was due to start. Khrushchev flew to Paris, accompanied by Gromyko and Malinovsky. At the preliminary meeting of the heads of government he announced that he would take part in its work only if Eisenhower would condemn the flights by American aircraft over the USSR, forbid all such flights in future and punish those responsible. Eisenhower refused. He merely announced a temporary cessation of the flights and put forward a proposal, unacceptable to the USSR, for 'open skies'.

The summit meeting was ruined; the planned visit to the USSR by President Eisenhower was also cancelled on the grounds that 'in the circumstances' the Soviet people 'could not receive the President of the USA with the hospitality due to him'. The Soviet press now openly condemned American policy.

The cancellation of the summit and of the American President's visit to the USSR modified Khrushchev's work schedule for June 1960 but did not lighten it. He continued to work twelve, fourteen, sometimes sixteen hours a day and certainly never observed the recent law reducing the length of the working day. Instead, he spent nearly a week in Romania at the Congress of the Romanian Communist Party, received in Moscow the President of India and the Prime Minister of Indonesia, who both came on official visits, then headed a Government delegation that spent a week in Austria, where he met leading political figures, took part in conferences of businessmen and talked with the leaders of trade unions. He inspected several large factories, visited the former concentration camp at Mauthausen and went to the Mozart house museum in Salzburg.

Soviet-American relations were also threatened by the situation in Cuba. During 1960 it became clear that the national democratic revolution in Cuba was developing into a socialist one. Relations between the USSR and Cuba improved accordingly, while those between the new Cuba and the USA deteriorated. Leading American politicians declared that the USA could not and must not tolerate the

existence of a Communist regime in the western hemisphere. The USA proclaimed a complete trade boycott of Cuba and refused to buy Cuban sugar or to sell Cuba the goods she needed. Naturally, the Soviet Union and other socialist countries increased their economic aid to Cuba.

On 22 September 1960 the composition of the USSR's delegation to the fifteenth session of the General Assembly of the United Nations was announced. It was to be led by Khrushchev, and the other members were A. A. Gromyko, V. A. Zorin, S. A. Vinogradov and A. V. Soldatov. This news caused a political sensation throughout the world. The President of the USA could not visit the USSR and express his views there unless invited, but the head of the Soviet state could attend a UN General Assembly in New York without any invitation and voice his opinions there.

At that time a visit from Khrushchev was extremely undesirable from the standpoint of the American Government because of the spy-plane incident. Even Japan, which Eisenhower had intended to visit after his trip to the USSR, had, as a result of mass demonstrations, asked him to postpone his visit. Furthermore, the USA was entering the decisive phase of an election struggle between Republican Richard Nixon and Democrat John F. Kennedy. Khrushchev's visit distracted attention from the election campaign and was an unwelcome event for the Republican Administration. Following Khrushchev's example, nearly all the socialist countries announced that their delegations to this session of UNO would be headed by their leading men.

Khrushchev took one more step for the sake of dramatic effect. He did not use the TU-114 plane to fly to the USA. The Soviet group flew only as far as Kaliningrad, where with five other delegations – the Ukrainian headed by N. Podgorny, the Byelorussian by K. Mazurov, the Hungarian by János Kádár, the Bulgarian by Zhivkov and the Romanian by Gheorghiu-Dej – they boarded the liner *Baltika*. On 9 September they set sail for the West.

Among other leaders expected at the United Nations meeting were Gomulka (Poland), Mehmet Shehu (Albania), Tito (Yugoslavia), Sekou Touré (Guinea), King Hussein (Jordan), Saeb Salam (Lebanon), Fidel Castro (Cuba), Kwame Nkrumah (Ghana) and Indian Premier Nehru. Under pressure from public opinion Harold Macmillan and also the Prime Ministers of Australia, Canada and New Zealand all declared that they would attend.

For security reasons, the American authorities stated, Khrushchev's movements would be restricted to the island of Manhattan, where the

United Nations headquarters is situated. The same restriction was imposed on Castro. The Soviet delegation was housed on Park Avenue. The building was surrounded by a strong police guard and besieged by hundreds of newspaper correspondents. On 20 September, the day after their arrival, Khrushchev and other members of the Soviet delegation made their way to Harlem, where the Cuban group was staying in a modest hotel. This was Khrushchev's first encounter with Castro.

On 23 September Khrushchev made a speech to the plenary session of the Assembly that was published under the title: 'Freedom and Independence to all Colonial Peoples. Solving the Problem of Universal Disarmament'. This, along with speeches by Nkrumah, Castro, Tito and Nasser, received far more attention from the world press than did those of Eisenhower and Macmillan. During this session Khrushchev gave numerous interviews and receptions and met the leaders of many states, including Nehru, Sukarno, Tito (after several years of estrangement and mutual accusation) and Macmillan.

Although some heads of state spent only a few days in New York, leaving subsequent work to their Foreign Ministers, Khrushchev stayed for over three weeks. On 30 September he spoke in the Assembly about the restoration of China's rights in the United Nations. When the Spanish delegate rose to reply, Khrushchev left the hall. He used his right of reply several times and sometimes lost his temper, interrupting the speaker with objections delivered from his seat, in violation of the rules of discussion. None of the debates was marked by civility, but twice Khrushchev went too far. First, he interrupted the Philippines' delegate and called him a 'lackey of American imperialism', which for the representative of a country that had only just won its independence was both insulting and unjust. (In a more detailed reply Khrushchev tried to smooth over the incident by referring to the same delegate as 'not a bad fellow'.) Second, he interrupted a Western delegate's speech by taking off his shoe and banging it on his desk. Later, Khrushchev's son-in-law, Adzhubei, speaking at the Twenty-Second Congress, tried to represent the 'prank' as an example of Khrushchev's resolute struggle against imperialism, but his behaviour was condemned in United Nations circles, and the Soviet delegation was fined \$10,000 for its breach of procedure.

On 14 October Khrushchev flew back to Moscow, where a great deal of work awaited him. First in importance were preparations for another International Conference of Communist and Workers' Parties, the need for which was dictated by increasing differences with

the Yugoslav League of Communists, the Albanian Party of Labour and the Chinese Communist Party.

The conflict with the last that had begun essentially after the Twentieth Congress had soon affected foreign policy and the problems associated with the national liberation movement in Asia, Africa and Latin America, and had been exacerbated by armed clashes that took place on the border between India and China in early 1960. The frontier had never been precisely demarcated, and it was a long way from the political centres of both states. The Soviet Union published both China's and India's version of what had happened and offered to mediate. This offer caused considerable irritation in Peking, where China's leaders had counted on their ally's unquestioning acceptance of their account of events, but the Soviet Union remained neutral because Soviet experts were not convinced that China was in the right. In response to an invitation from the Government of India, the Soviet Government had dispatched Voroshilov, Kozlov and Furtseva to attempt to find a solution to the problem. Meanwhile a lively correspondence was conducted with Peking.

On 6 February the Central Committee proposed a meeting between the leaders of the two Parties, and on 5 April the Soviet Government officially invited Mao Tse-tung to visit the USSR. The Chinese did not respond to either of these proposals, but articles published in China – on the ninetieth anniversary of Lenin's birth – criticized propositions in the Declaration of the 1957 Moscow Conference of Communist Parties, although they had, in fact, been signed by the Chinese representatives. At the end of June the Soviet Central Committee sent to all Communist Parties an 'information memorandum' that criticized the theoretical views of the leadership of the Chinese Party and its allegations. In turn, the Chinese leadership wrote to the leading organs of the other Communist Parties.

This inter-Party dissension affected relations between the two countries. In China many Soviet specialists were accused of conservatism, and documents criticizing the Communist Party of the Soviet Union were circulated. Soviet retaliation was quite determined. On 16 July the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs was informed that all Soviet specialists were being recalled from China. This decision would probably have had to be taken sooner or later, but in 1960 it was perhaps somewhat hasty and clearly indicated Khrushchev's irritation and impatience.

As a result of the failure of the 'Great Leap Forward', China was experiencing tremendous economic difficulties, and the recall of the

Soviet specialists provided an excuse to attribute these setbacks largely to this unexpected action. This was an exaggeration, of course, for there had been no more than 1,600 specialists there altogether: in the coal industry there were no more than three, in oil seven, in agricultural machinery two, in the Ministry for State Farms and Virgin Lands three, and in the Ministries of Agriculture and Forestry only one.¹

In October 1960 an editorial commission in Moscow began work on a draft of the Final Statement of the International Conference of Communist Parties. When they read the draft the Chinese delegates demanded that reference in it to the international significance of the Twentieth Congress be removed. The Soviet delegation could not agree.

The Conference took place in Moscow between 10 November and 1 December, and representatives of eighty-one Parties attended (they did not include the League of Communists of Yugoslavia). From the start, the Chinese made critical observations about the problems of the strategy and tactics of the international movement, but found themselves isolated in the discussion and, on instructions from their Central Committee, signed the Final Statement.

Immediately after the Conference, the Central Committee invited a delegation from the Chinese Central Committee, headed by Liu Shao-chi, to visit the USSR. The Chinese accepted. When Khrushchev met Liu Shao-chi he repeatedly stressed his desire to overcome the differences that had arisen and to improve relations between the two states and Parties. At first it seemed that these efforts would succeed, for on 10 December the Chinese newspaper *Renminribao* wrote: 'There is no doubt whatsoever that this visit by Chairman Liu Shao-chi has further consolidated and developed the great friendship and unity between the peoples of China and the Soviet Union and has written a brilliant and glorious page in the history of Sino-Soviet friendship.'

A similar sentiment was expressed by Mao Tse-tung in his 1961 New Year greetings to Khrushchev and Brezhnev, but the argument was soon to break out again, and with renewed violence.

The Last Good Harvest and the Seven-Year Plan

Agricultural production had slumped in 1957. Less grain had been harvested than in the record year of 1956. The volume of meat and dairy products had risen by 10 per cent, but the country was still a long way from catching up with the United States. Summer 1958 held greater promise: it became clear that a good harvest was ripening. The weather had certainly been kind, but measures to stimulate farming that had been adopted in 1953–7 were beginning to take effect. The 1958 grain harvest amounted to 8·6 milliard poods – almost a milliard more than the record harvest of 1956 and 71 per cent more than that of 1953. For the first time it was possible to regard the country's grain problem as having been solved. On the animal husbandry side, however, the annual production increase had been no more than 3 per cent, although meat production was 4 per cent higher than in 1957 and 33 per cent higher than in 1953. Animal fodder and potatoes had also lagged behind the plan. Khrushchev abandoned forthwith his aim to catch up with, and outstrip, the meat production of the United States within three to five years. At the Central Committee plenum held in December he announced a plan for agricultural development over the next seven years. The plan envisaged the doubling of meat production by 1964.

He encouraged all efforts to boost meat production. With his approval, the leaders of Ryazan oblast undertook to increase production in their oblast by a factor of 3·8 during 1959 and to triple the amount available for state procurement. An oblast that in 1958 had sold 48,000 tonnes of meat to the state was committing itself now to selling 150,000 tonnes in 1959! The editors of *Pravda* at first refused to publish this intelligence, and it appeared in print only after Khrushchev had personally intervened. Under pressure, other oblasts were obliged to revise their former targets. The krays of Stavropol and

Krasnodar promised to increase their annual production 2.5 times, and the Moscow oblast and the Republic of Byelorussia to double theirs. It was a highly risky initiative in the spirit of China's 'Great Leap Forward'.

In September 1958 the Central Committee decided to convene an extraordinary Twenty-First Congress to discuss the directives for the new (this time seven-year) plan for the development of the Soviet economy. Khrushchev was approved as rapporteur. The principal motive for the new plan, to cover the years 1959–65, was the need to reorganize of the management of the economy. Henceforth the plan would have to define targets for the different branches of the economy and for each of the Sovnarkhozes.

The Congress opened on 27 January and ended on 5 February 1959. Because it was an extraordinary Congress, no reports were presented, no political problems were mentioned and hardly any echo was heard of the events of the June 1957 plenum. The main problems considered were those of the country's economic development in the coming seven years. The control figures given in Khrushchev's report were most impressive. It was proposed to increase gross industrial production by 80 per cent, engineering production by 100 per cent, the output of electric power by 120 per cent and that of the chemical industry by 300 per cent. High rates of development were planned for electronics, electrical engineering, the production of polymer materials and atomic-power engineering. The share of oil and gas in the country's fuel and power balance was to increase from 31 to 51 per cent, and all branches of light industry were to expand, particularly consumer durables such as television sets, refrigerators and washing machines. Real incomes of workers and collective farmers were to rise by 40 per cent. Fifteen million flats were to be built in the towns and 7 million houses in the villages. A great deal of propaganda attended the resolution concerning the control figures for the Seven-Year Plan. Even *Krokodil*, abandoning its role as a journal of satire, wrote:

The control figures for the Seven-Year Plan, as given in the report by N. S. Khrushchev, are like a scattering of stars on a blue silk curtain. They gleam and twinkle like the stars. They live; they radiate energy; our hearts are kindled by their rays. The figure for the smelting of steel burns with a blinding white light. That for non-ferrous metals has a greenish sheen. The figure for wheat has a golden glow. The figures for textiles sparkle with all the colours of the rainbow. We see a picture of the birth of these figures, astounding the imagination of mankind. . . . Behind

each figure stand its creators, the masters of the land, the builders of Communism. Each figure is a concentration of creative energy. Altogether this is a picture of planned economy, of the nationwide management of a socialist economy. . . .¹

Another objective provoked considerably less enthusiasm. At the end of 1958 a Central Committee plenum had decided in principle, on the basis of a report submitted by Khrushchev, to reorganize the machine/tractor stations and to sell machinery to the collective farms. After a month's all-Union discussion of the measure, the Supreme Soviet had sanctioned the reorganization. This new reform was further proof of how a reform that is basically sound can, through haste, uninspired application, lack of attention to detail and the absence of preliminary experiment and economic analysis, damage rather than serve a country's economy.

Towards the end of the 1920s the machine/tractor stations had been organized to help the first collective farms, which possessed neither the means nor the cadres to obtain or make use of agricultural machinery. Before the war there had been over 7,000 of them in the USSR; by the beginning of 1958 there were over 8,000. In the 1930s and 1940s it had become clear that measures both to develop the machine/tractor stations and to encourage the acquisition of machinery by the collective farms themselves were essential. Stalin would not hear of this, however, and the collective farms were allowed to acquire only trucks. In Stalin's view, the sale of machinery to collective farms was inadmissible on principle in a socialist society, since it would expand the circulation of commodities by transforming part of the means of production into a commodity. Nevertheless, as a result of the increase in the size of collective farms, the rise in incomes, the availability of an ever greater variety of machines for the all-round mechanization of agricultural production and the more extensive education of country people, the question of mechanizing collective farms more fully inevitably arose. The system under which there were two masters on the collective farms, one responsible for machinery, the other for manual work and the transport of produce, had become a hindrance to development.

The ability of collective farms to make use of their own machines had been demonstrated by an experiment carried out in 1957 at Stavropol, where twelve large farms had been given the machinery held by neighbouring machine/tractor stations. The system of linking these with collective farms, however, had come into being thirty years

earlier; it had been modified in one way or another over the years and now called for continued experimentation and a gradual implementation of the reform. Khrushchev himself, in his reports to the Central Committee plenum and to the Supreme Soviet, spoke of gradual reorganization that would take account of local peculiarities and conditions. He appealed for this particularly in areas where agriculture was less advanced and the collective farms were weaker and poorer than elsewhere. As he put it, the reorganization of the machine/tractor stations should be carried out over two or three years, and in some places an even longer period. 'In this matter,' he said, 'it does not do to hurry.'²

This warning was soon forgotten: three months after the adoption of the new law most of the machine/tractor stations had been closed. By the end of 1958 more than 80 per cent of all the farms had bought their machinery. The remainder were the weaker collective farms. At the December plenum, after an 'exchange of views', it was decided to sell machinery to the weaker farms too, 'so that they should not feel dependent'. By the beginning of 1959 only 385 of the 8,000 machine/tractor stations were left.

This haste greatly harmed collective-farm production. The farms had to lay out enormous sums to buy the machinery, and they had to build premises in which to house and repair it. More than a milliard roubles a year was spent on fuel and lubricants, and the farms also took over the payment of the machine operators. Yet in 1958 only 40 per cent of the collective farms could be classified as economically sturdy enterprises.

Even for the comparatively rich farms things were not easy. The law provided for payment for the machinery by instalments over three to five years. For the weaker farms payments corresponded to their previous annual payments in kind for the services of the machine/tractor stations. Soon, however, a group of rich farms announced their intention to pay for all the machinery they had bought in one year. Khrushchev supported this initiative. Under pressure, poorer farms committed themselves to doing the same thing, which entailed the postponement of all other projects for several years and even the reduction of payments to collective-farm members. A substantial portion of the farms' ready cash often had to be sacrificed to buy the machinery.

Initially, the collective farms had bought machines that were new and in good order, but by the summer of 1958 a quantity of unsold machines had accumulated in the centres. It would have been sensible

to reduce the price of these machines, no longer new, and even to allow the farms to have some of them for nothing, but local Party organizations brought pressure to bear, compelling the farms to buy them at prices that doubled during the course of the year, as did the prices of spare parts, petrol and other materials.

The reorganization of the machine/tractor stations affected the agricultural machinery industry. After the farms had bought the stations' stock they had no money left to buy other machines. Instead of advancing credits, the state began to cut back the production of agricultural machinery, converting many works to other lines of production. The supply of new machines decreased appreciably: in 1958-9 the production of combines, trucks and all other machines was halved. Economists calculated that the farms were making less use of the machinery that they had bought than they had of the machinery that had been operated by the machine/tractor stations.

No new system of servicing and repairs was devised for the machinery acquired by the collective farms. They could at best manage running repairs, certainly nothing major. As a result, the problems that arose were dealt with altogether too hastily. Furthermore, the machine operators from the former machine/tractor stations suffered financially when they became collective-farm workers. On the poorer farms their incomes fell sharply, resulting in the migration of thousands of tractor and combine drivers to the towns in search of better-paid work. Although one of the consequences of the reorganization was the transfer of considerable resources from the farms to the state Treasury, over the next seven or eight years the utilization of machinery on the collective farms deteriorated, and farm production suffered irreparable damage.

In December 1959 the agenda of a regular Central Committee plenum provided for discussion of 'the further development of agriculture'. Reports were given by the leaders of all the Union Republics. Khrushchev began his own report with a section headed 'What the example set by the working people of Ryazan oblast teaches us'. The point was that just before the plenum opened the Ryazan leaders had announced that their oblast had fulfilled all its obligations and had sold the state 150,000 tonnes of meat. They had even undertaken to increase the amount available for procurement to between 180,000 and 200,000 tonnes the next year. Khrushchev did not yet know what a high price the collective farms and farmers of that oblast were paying for these inflated figures.

The facts came to light some time later. It turned out that the success

of Ryazan oblast had been a deception. A considerable proportion of the breeding stock and many of the milch cows had been dispatched to meat-packing factories, and collective farmers had been obliged to purchase cattle from neighbouring oblasts the following year. Many were ruined. The oblast could not hope to fulfil even its obligations under the Seven-Year Plan, let alone more ambitious targets. When he realized that his ruse had been uncovered, the First Secretary of the obkom, A. N. Larionov, shot himself. The Central Committee had to take urgent steps to restore the damaged economy of Ryazan oblast.

The consequences of the hasty liquidation of the machine/tractor stations continued to be felt in 1960. The supply of machinery to the villages declined, and the use made of the available machinery decreased. Although industry was developing steadily, agriculture was falling far short of the requirements of the Seven-Year Plan. After its comparatively rapid development in 1954–8 it was once again in a deplorable state. The reserves that had been earmarked to fund the development of agriculture had been practically exhausted. Agriculture now had to develop through capital investment, more mechanization, much greater use of chemical fertilizers, the extension and improvement of roads in rural areas, the building of grain elevators and covered threshing floors, the reinforcement of the cadres of machine operators and so on. For decades the countryside had been supporting industry so that it could develop rapidly. What was needed now was the assignment of more of the state's funds to promote the development of agriculture and those branches of industry that were connected with agriculture. But Khrushchev had not yet appreciated the need for a new strategy where agriculture was concerned. He still put his faith in administrative reorganization and the introduction of new crops; he still argued for the reduction of private holdings. It was a blind alley.

PART SIX

Tension at Home and Abroad
1961–1963

Agriculture: Reorganization and Reform

Khrushchev was disturbed by the increasingly intractable problems posed by agriculture in the Soviet Union, and in January 1961 yet another plenum of the Central Committee was convened. Its agenda was a familiar one: 'Measures to promote the development of agriculture'. On this occasion the decision was taken to reorganize the Ministry of Agriculture of the USSR and those of all the Union Republics.

The Ministries were no longer to concern themselves with the planning and organization of production; they were relieved of responsibility for financing the collective and state farms and for supplying them with machinery. Instead they were now to concentrate on the scientific direction of agriculture; on raising the cultural standards of farming; on disseminating accumulated experience; on finding solutions to the problems raised by the selection of appropriate strains, the sowing of seeds and the breeding of pedigree stock; and on the publication of agricultural literature. Furthermore, all the Ministries of Agriculture were to be moved from the capital cities of the Republics to sites on advanced state farms, so that officials could ensure that the guidance their Ministries offered was translated into practice. Naturally, this move was not to the liking of the officials, especially as they continued to live in the cities and had to commute to their Ministries daily in special coaches; nor was it a simple matter for visitors to find their way to the relocated Ministries.

The former Minister of Agriculture, V. Matskevich, was dismissed. The man who was appointed in his place was M. A. Olshansky, a well-known disciple of the biologist Lysenko, under whose malign influence a whole generation of Soviet agricultural scientists was seduced into subjugating rigorous objectivity to political expediency.

Soon after the plenum Khrushchev set out on another progress around the country, accompanied by G. Voronov and D. Polyansky. The premier was anxious to supervise all agricultural development personally. First he travelled to the Ukraine, where he attended a plenum of the Central Committee of the Ukrainian Communist Party. Next he spent a few days in Rostov-on-Don, where a conference of production workers from northern Caucasia was in progress. He visited Tbilisi for the first time in several years; agricultural workers from all over Transcaucasia were attending a conference there. At Voronezh another conference was under way, at which Khrushchev criticized sharply the secretaries of the obkoms of the central black-earth zone; and a similar gathering of agricultural workers from the non-black-earth zone was being held in Moscow, to which he returned for a short while before setting off for the Urals to attend conferences in Sverdlovsk and Kurgan. At the beginning of March he visited Novosibirsk where, besides surveying the state of the region's agriculture, he learned something about the work of the Siberian branch of the Academy of Sciences of the Soviet Union. On the 12th he was in Akmolinsk, the principal city of the virgin lands, and on the 17th in the capital of Kazakhstan, Alma-Ata. It was not until 24 March that he returned to Moscow. By then sowing was under way in the southern areas of the country.

In the autumn of 1961 preliminary production figures were published. Industrial production was expected to have increased by 9 per cent during the course of the year – a creditable achievement, but the increase would be less than 10 per cent for the first time for several years. As for agriculture, once again progress was disappointing. Gross production had risen over the year by 2·5 per cent but the marketable proportion of that by only 0·7 per cent. Grain production had increased by between 2 and 3 per cent and cotton by 5 per cent. The quantity of livestock had risen markedly, but the production of meat, 8·7 million tonnes, was lower than it had been in 1959. Figures for milk and wool showed that production had risen but only by 1·5 per cent. The supply of meat and of dairy products was inadequate to meet the needs of the Soviet Union; it could no longer keep pace with the country's rapidly expanding urban population. Yet a programme had just been adopted by the Party that promised a sharp rise in agricultural productivity.

Khrushchev was disappointed with the year's balance sheet, but he remained optimistic. He trusted neither the central nor the local Party organs, for he believed that directives that were sound enough were being inadequately implemented. He decided, therefore, that

although he had visited nearly all the main farming areas of the USSR at the beginning of the year, he would set out on another tour of the country.

He travelled first to Uzbekistan, where he attended a conference of cotton workers. His next ports of call were Tselinograd in the virgin-lands area of Kazakhstan, where a conference of agricultural workers was in progress, and Shortandy, where he visited the Grain Institute headed by A. Barayev. From there he went on to Altai kray and spent some time studying the work of the Altai Agricultural Institute, which was under the direction of G. I. Nalivayko. Next he visited Novosibirsk to attend a conference of Siberian agriculturalists before returning to Moscow, where 11,000 agricultural workers from the Central, North-West and Volga-Vyatka economic regions had gathered for a conference at the Palace of Sport. At the end of December he left Moscow again, this time for the Ukraine and Byelorussia.

At all these conferences the central theme of Khrushchev's speeches was the issue of crop rotation, which was being hotly debated by agronomists across the country. At the Grain Institute in Shortandy, for example, Barayev claimed that because of inadequate rainfall and the scarcity of herbicides in most parts of the south and south-east, spring and summer harvests could be guaranteed only if fields were left fallow for a large part of the crop cycle. By contrast, Nalivayko at the Altai Agricultural Institute advocated a new method of farming involving the intensive cultivation of maize and certain other crops, such as legumes, that required tilling. He had assured Khrushchev that the universal introduction of this system would ensure a speedy increase in agricultural productivity and, furthermore, that no capital outlay would be necessary. It is hardly surprising that Khrushchev should have preferred this system to that championed by the Grain Institute in the virgin-lands area: he was eager for rapid success at minimum cost. In this he was supported by Lysenko, Nalivayko and Olshansky, under whose influence Khrushchev criticized, unjustly and rather offensively, the distinguished Kurgan agronomist T. Maltsev, who upheld the importance of fallow periods to the agriculture of Siberia and the south-east. (Yet, not long before, a session of the Academy of Agricultural Sciences had been held at the collective farm directed by Maltsev specifically so that its members could learn more about the so-called 'Maltsev system'.)

Academician R. Williams came in for particularly harsh censure. His system of grass rotation, which had been adopted by agriculturalists in many parts of the country since 1948, when it had Lysenko's support,

now seemed to Khrushchev the chief cause of the backwardness of agriculture in the Soviet Union, as under the system about a quarter of the country's arable land was being allowed to lie fallow or was under a mixture of grasses for hay at any one time. There is no doubt that Khrushchev's criticism was justified in the main. The indiscriminate application of Williams's system, which was developed for the conditions of the 1930s when the production of fertilizer was very low, had had disastrous effects. However, the swift and radical changes that Khrushchev was proposing, if introduced universally, would probably be just as harmful, since productivity is determined by a number of different factors. In support of his arguments, Khrushchev frequently cited the example of the maize states of the United States, although conditions there were quite different from those that obtained in most parts of the Soviet Union. Furthermore, calculations made by Soviet economists over the years indicated not only that in the non-black-earth zone a labour-intensive crop such as maize was far more expensive to produce than were perennial or annual grasses, but also that after a cold summer – the norm in the central zones of the USSR and in Siberia – maize yields were too low to provide adequate fodder for livestock.

Clearly, in a country as large as the Soviet Union, where conditions vary enormously from one region to another, no single system of farming can be adopted universally. From that point of view, Khrushchev's criticism of Vilyams and others was justified – but the replacement of one system by another based on equally inflexible prescriptions made no sense either. The same could be said of Khrushchev's rigid attitude to the question of fallow periods. Between 1954 and 1959 he and his advisers had advocated the elimination of fallow in zones that received plentiful rainfall. Then it was acknowledged that areas afflicted regularly by drought required a fallow period. By the end of the decade, however, Khrushchev had begun to call for the elimination of fallow periods in the south as well, the virgin lands included. Under pressure from the leadership, the area of arable land under fallow steadily diminished: between 1953 and 1958 it had shrunk from 15·8 to 10·9 per cent, and by 1962, in the wake of a rigorous campaign that had followed Khrushchev's 1961 speech, it had been reduced to 3·3 per cent.¹ The decision proved mistaken; it was not long before there was abundant evidence of the importance of fallow to the crop-rotation system.

During most of February 1962 Khrushchev rested at the state dacha near Gagri. When he returned to Moscow he turned his attention to

agriculture once again, this time at a plenum of the Central Committee that was held between 5 and 9 March.

In his report, as had been expected, he argued for the universal introduction of the new system of farming, but the principal topic that the plenum addressed was his proposal for a restructured system of agricultural management. For the last thirty years the essential link between the Party organs responsible for the management and direction of the work of collective and state farms and the farms themselves had been the raikoms and raiispolkoms in the rural areas. These had been charged not only with the supervision of agricultural matters but also with responsibility for all other aspects of rural life, including health services, education, village culture, roads, the postal service and so on. Although their chief concern had always been agricultural production, Khrushchev was anxious to establish yet another tier of administrative bodies whose brief would be to supervise the work of between twenty and thirty collective and state farms.

Khrushchev's report and the transcript of his concluding speech at the Central Committee plenum reveal that he had not considered the structure and function of these new administrative units in any great depth. He was improvising, thinking aloud. He argued that their purview should extend, in general, over two or three raions. A group of inspectors, drawn from among the qualified specialists in the district, would be attached to each unit; their task would be to offer advice to the farms, not to issue instructions. In the event of disputes, the manager of a state farm or the chairman of a collective farm was to have the last word. To every unit would be allocated a Party organizer from the Central Committee or the obkom and a group of Party and Komsomol executives, and each one would have its own newspaper.

An objection was raised: what would be the role of the raikoms once responsibility for the management of agriculture had been transferred to another body? Khrushchev provided no satisfactory answer to this question at the time. It was only later, after the plenum, that he proposed that the secretary of each rural raikom be appointed deputy to the Party organizer of the new administrative units. The proposal found favour; the Central Committee and the Council of Ministers decided to set up similar organs at the levels of the oblast and the Union Republic, and subsequently N. G. Ignatov, formerly a member of the Central Committee's Presidium, was appointed chairman of the Union Committee for Agriculture.

It soon became clear that the activities of the new administrative units were duplicating those of the raikoms and raiispolkoms.

Khrushchev suggested that the existing system of raions, which he now described as 'old-fashioned', should be replaced by a new system in which larger raions would embrace the same territory as that which fell within the jurisdiction of the new farm-management bodies. In June 1962 he claimed that the old network of small raions was now out of date because of the ease and speed of communication afforded by the telephone, the telegraph and the car.

Agriculture benefited not at all from these hasty measures, to which a great deal of attention was devoted during the spring and summer of that year. For a start, in the main the recently established farm-management units turned out to be no more than superfluous links in the administrative chain, as had been predicted. Their activities ran counter to the Central Committee's earlier decision to grant the collective and state farms more responsibility for their own production plans. Then the centres of the new raions were too remote from the inhabitants of the villages; more often than not, they were located in small towns subject to oblast administration. The new raions themselves were too large to administer efficiently – despite the telephone and the telegraph. In the RSFSR and the Ukraine, for example, each raion had at least twice as many inhabitants as before. As a consequence of a considerable increase in the volume of work handled by each raion, which was not matched by a commensurate increase in the number of staff employed, the public services provided by the raion soviets deteriorated.

It was not only at the local level that the new systems proved counter-productive: at the all-Union level the management of agriculture had become labyrinthine.

There was a further source of discontent. Although the prices that the Government paid for agricultural produce had risen several times since 1953, there was still little incentive for meat and dairy farms in particular to expand production. On the contrary, since in most zones the prices paid for meat and dairy products did not even cover the costs of production, the more a farm supplied to the Government, the higher were its losses, which it attempted to recoup by disposing of its other produce at exorbitant prices. Animal husbandry was the principal victim of this unfortunate cycle. In order to stimulate production, Khrushchev proposed to raise procurement prices over the whole country by an average of 35 per cent for cattle and poultry and between 5 and 10 per cent for butter and cream.

This measure necessarily entailed larger budgetary allocations to agriculture. The Treasury was desperately short of money, however.

As a result, on 1 June 1962 the retail price of meat was increased by 30 per cent and that of butter by 25 per cent. The workers who were hit by these price increases were not greatly comforted by a 5 per cent drop in the price of sugar and a 20 per cent reduction in the price of staple textiles.

Discontent was widespread, but it was most acute in those parts of Northern Caucasia where meat and butter had formerly been cheap and plentiful and were now expensive and in short supply. In Novocherkassk, one of the towns in this 'economic area', the workers were sufficiently enraged to organize both a strike and a demonstration. The consequences were tragic.

There are various accounts of what happened. My information has been supplied by an eye-witness, a distant relative of mine, who was visiting Novocherkassk at the time. According to him, angry demonstrators marched on the offices of the gorkom and gorispolkom, which were being guarded by troops that had been hastily summoned to the town and placed under the command of General I. Pliyev. The soldiers were ordered to fire into the air, but several bullets struck some small boys who had climbed the trees that bordered the square in which the offices stood. When the workers and members of their families saw the children fall from the trees, dead and wounded, they rushed at the soldiers. The troops' second volley was aimed straight at them. Outside Rostov oblast little was known about the events of that day. No reports appeared in the foreign press. Local people were outraged, however, and both in Novocherkassk itself and in Rostov-on-Don the factories closed for three days. Unofficially, martial law prevailed.

At the end of the difficult, eventful year of 1962 Khrushchev took stock of the progress made by industry and agriculture in the USSR. The year's results suggested that there was cause for both satisfaction and grave disappointment.

Industrial productivity had increased by 9.5 per cent, which was higher than the target established by the Seven-Year Plan. Agriculture was static, however, despite all the measures that had been taken to encourage its development. Gross agricultural production had risen by no more than 1.2 per cent during the year. The supply of food to the towns was becoming increasingly inadequate: the urban population of the Soviet Union had risen by 16 per cent since 1958, while gross agricultural production in the last four years had risen by only 6.6 per cent.

The abolition of fallow and the consequent increase in the amount of land under cultivation had certainly contributed to a 7.3 per cent

rise in grain production – but it was precisely the land that had been permitted to lie fallow that gave high yields; on other land the harvest was below average. The extensive cultivation of maize had entailed huge losses for most collective and state farms. Although in the east and south-east the summer of 1962 had been very dry, elsewhere it had been cold and wet. As a result, between 70 and 80 per cent of all the maize sown in those cold areas had been lost, and other crops had suffered too. In the virgin lands soil erosion was posing a severe problem; for six or seven years wheat had been sown annually, and there had been no recourse either to crop rotation or to fertilization. Several million hectares of land had had to be written off.

The production of meat had risen by 9 per cent to 9.5 million tonnes, but overall animal husbandry had expanded by no more than 2.4 per cent. As for vegetables and potatoes, 1962 had been a disastrous year. Only 70 million tonnes of potatoes were harvested, which was lower than the figure for 1940.

In the light of these results, Khrushchev made another change at the Ministry of Agriculture. The new Minister was I. P. Volovchenko, who during the last eleven years had headed one of the largest and most prosperous state farms in Lipetsk oblast. At the same time nearly all the Ministers of Agriculture of the Union Republics were dismissed and were replaced by the managers of the most successful state farms in the respective Republics. Khrushchev hoped that the introduction into the administrative structure of men with actual experience of production would prompt a decisive change for the better.

Khrushchev spent the second half of his 1963 summer holiday in Yugoslavia, as he was anxious to improve relations between the Soviet Union and President Tito, which had deteriorated markedly during the last five years. On his return he was greeted by news of an extremely bad harvest in many parts of the country. Winter-sown crops had been blighted by a severe winter, and spring wheat and vegetables had suffered during a long, hot summer. In some cities flour and bread were running short. The premier decided to take a short trip around the country so that he could assess the scale of the calamity. In the speeches that he gave in Volgograd oblast, Astrakhan, the Kuban and the southern oblasts of the Ukraine he concentrated on a new theme: the use of chemical fertilizers and herbicides. Although much had been said about the need for more widespread chemicalization of agriculture both before and since the war, and specifically when the Seven-Year Plan for 1959–65 was being drawn up, little had been done to promote it. The Soviet Union lagged behind the United States,

France, West Germany and Britain in her use of fertilizers – in the United States three times more fertilizer was used per hectare of arable land and in West Germany fifteen times more – and she produced hardly any herbicides.

A programme of chemicalization would certainly yield results in due course, but the problems posed by the shortfall in grain production in 1963 were very pressing. It was calculated that the state would be able to procure only between 10 and 12 million tonnes of grain that year – less than in 1962. There were no large reserves, and stricter rationing might create even more discontent. Only one expedient was left to Khrushchev: the purchase of grain from Canada, Australia and certain other countries, including Romania, where the harvest had been good. It was the first time in her history that the Soviet Union had had to resort to importing foodstuffs on such a huge scale.

When he returned to Moscow Khrushchev convened a plenum of the Central Committee, at which he submitted a report advocating urgent investment in the chemical industry as the principal means of expanding agricultural productivity and safeguarding the well-being of the working people. The decision was taken to increase the production of chemical fertilizers in the USSR to between 70 and 80 million tonnes in 1970 (it had reached no more than 17 million tonnes in 1962) and that of herbicides to 450,000 tonnes; furthermore, the plenum sanctioned the purchase abroad of plant for several large chemical factories. Although the scheme was sound enough, it was over-ambitious, and Khrushchev was to be given little credit for its advantages in the months to come.

Conflict and Compromise: Berlin, Cuba and Peking

Disappointment with the state of agriculture and the progress of industrial growth was offset to some extent by the advances that were being made in space research. After launching the first artificial Earth satellite, the Soviet Union had confidently maintained her lead in the field. In 1957 and 1958 two more satellites had been launched, both larger than the first. In 1959 *Lunik II* had succeeded in landing on the Moon, and when Khrushchev had visited the USA in September 1959 he had presented President Eisenhower with a replica of the pennant that had been placed on the Moon's surface. A month later, in October 1959, *Lunik III* was launched; as it orbited the Moon, the satellite took the first photographs of the Moon's dark side. In May 1960 a spaceship weighing 4.5 tonnes orbited the Earth. Its launch was intended to test the feasibility of putting a man into space. In August of that year a second spaceship, with two dogs aboard, confirmed that a safe return from orbit was possible, and in a designated touch-down area. In December the experiment was successfully repeated. The space research and development bureau, headed by S. P. Korolev, informed Khrushchev that the launch of a manned spacecraft was now considered practicable.

Early in 1961 the research effort intensified. The weight of the spacecraft was increased to 6.5 tonnes. All those involved were prepared to acknowledge that a manned flight was imminent.

On 12 April 1961 preparations were complete. Twenty years later Herman Titov, Cosmonaut Number 2 and hence understudy to Yuri Gagarin who had been selected to undertake the mission, wrote:

I recall that extraordinary morning vividly. The hands of the clock moved steadily towards the crucial hour. Tension mounted in all those present – the members of the State Commission, the designers of the

craft, the research team, the cosmonauts themselves. Finally, the pre-start orders rang out, loud and authoritative. Yuri Gagarin presented his report to the chairman of the State Commission clearly and confidently: he was ready to begin the flight.

The command was given: 'Blast off!' – and we heard the voice of our comrade shouting, 'We're away!'

It was seven minutes past nine, Moscow time. Into the sky soared the first piloted spaceship, *Vostok*, with the first Soviet cosmonaut on board.¹

The news of the launch flashed around the world in seconds. In many Moscow shops and factories work stopped altogether as people listened to the radio reports of Gagarin's mission. The spacecraft passed over Latin America and then Africa before returning safely to Soviet territory. The venture was a brilliant success. Yuri Gagarin telephoned Khrushchev to report on his flight, and thousands of Muscovites, many of them students, surged on to the streets. Red Square, Manège Square, Gorky Street were packed with people congratulating themselves on the achievement. All over the world reaction to the success of the mission was as enthusiastic as it had been when the first Earth satellite was launched.

On 14 April Moscow gave Yuri Gagarin a triumphal welcome. Khrushchev and members of his Government met the cosmonaut at the airport and drove back to the Kremlin with him in open cars. A demonstration was held in Red Square. But there were some notable absences among the dignitaries who were assembled on the tribune of the Mausoleum: not one of the men who had designed, built and launched the first satellites and spaceships was present. It was some years later that we learned about the contribution of S. P. Korolev, the chief designer of space rockets – and that was only after his death. Although Western experts know the names of most of the men who were responsible for the Soviet Union's space programme, in their own country the suppression of their identity persists.

By June of that year the title Hero of Socialist Labour had been conferred, anonymously, on more than a hundred scientists and designers in recognition of their contribution to the success of the space programme. Seven thousand other orders and medals were awarded – from which we can deduce the importance of the programme. Khrushchev himself received the Order of Lenin and his third citation as a Hero of Socialist Labour 'for services to the rocket industry, science and technology and for his contribution to the

successful flight of the spacecraft *Vostok*, which has initiated a new phase in the conquest of space'.

A few months after Yuri Gagarin's momentous flight Herman Titov spent twenty-five hours in space and orbited the Earth seventeen times. Several satellites were launched. August 1962 saw the first group flight: A. G. Nikolayev commanded *Vostok III* and P. R. Popovich *Vostok IV*. Their flight lasted four days. In November of that year the Soviet Union launched *Mars I*, and in April 1963 Cosmonaut Number 5, V. F. Bykovsky, soared into space with Cosmonaut Number 6, Valentina Tereshkova, the first woman to make a flight in a spacecraft. On their return they were given a rapturous welcome in Moscow.

The achievements of the United States were much more modest. President Kennedy announced a new American space programme called Apollo, the aim to which was to land a man on the Moon, but the American press was quick to acknowledge that the United States was trailing in the space race. When American cosmonauts did eventually land on the Moon, it was said, they would be greeted by a short, stout man who would explain to them how maize could be grown there.

Reaction to other events that dominated the news during the course of those years and the following one was less light-hearted. As 1960 wore on, relations between Cuba and the USA became more and more strained, while Soviet-Cuban relations improved steadily. Finally, the United States severed diplomatic relations with Cuba, and in the greatest secrecy she prepared for a military operation in Cuba in which armed Cuban émigrés were to participate, with American backing. The tension grew. With increasing regularity American fighter planes flew low over Soviet ships that were bringing to Cuba cargoes of various kinds.

In Havana celebrations to mark the second anniversary of the Cuban revolution took the form of a military demonstration: the Rebel Army and the People's Militia paraded for seven hours. The demonstration was noted in Washington. John F. Kennedy, the newly elected President of the United States, made no move to cancel the operation that was being planned, but he did issue instructions that the United States' support for it should be substantially reduced. Nevertheless, those who were committed to the enterprise counted on success; they were hoping that the arrival of anti-Castro forces in Cuba would spark off a revolt against Castro's regime.

The plan was put into operation on Khrushchev's birthday, 17 April 1961. The invading force landed on the shore of a bay in Matanzas

province, on the Giron beach. After occupying a stretch of coastal territory, however, it found itself unable to advance. Castro himself, in command of the Cuban Government forces, attacked the invading army. Immediately the Soviet Government issued a communiqué assuring Cuba of its military aid and diplomatic support; simultaneously Khrushchev sent a personal message to Kennedy. But by 20 April, before the campaign of protest against the invasion of Cuba could gather momentum, the Cuban Government forces had seized their enemy's last strongholds and the invading army had been routed. The CIA's assessment of the instability of the Castro regime had proved wholly inaccurate.

The failure of this plan to intervene in Cuba and increasing hostility towards the island's regime on the part of the USA led to a still closer *rapprochement* between the Soviet Union and Cuba. The young Cuban army received further military aid from the USSR, and Soviet military specialists arrived in Cuba.

The abortive coup in Cuba coincided with the defeat of pro-American, right-wing forces in Laos, led by Prince Boun Oum and General Nosavan. The pro-American Government of Ngo Din Diem was also finding it difficult to retain power in South Vietnam. Among Washington's ruling circles these indignities abraded a certain sensitivity, particularly in view of recent reversals in the Middle East and Africa. American politicians were unaccustomed to such setbacks and were prepared neither to retreat nor to reconcile themselves to the prospect of a reduction of their influence over international politics.

However, the capacity of the United States to determine the course of events had indeed declined sharply. The Soviet Union had not only produced her own atomic and hydrogen bombs; she was also developing her arsenal of inter-continental ballistic missiles that were capable of transporting nuclear weapons to any point on the globe. The United States had established a dense network of military bases around the Soviet Union, from which formerly atomic strikes could have been made at the principal centres of the USSR without fear of retaliation. Now, however, this immunity had been fractured. The United States was having to reckon with the possible emergence of Communist regimes not only in Asia and Africa but also in the western hemisphere and the establishment of Soviet military bases in those regions. Washington was appalled by the prospect.

In May 1961 Khrushchev was engaged in routine activities. At the Kremlin he received a Belgian trade delegation, a Cuban youth delegation and a group of Egyptian Members of Parliament led by the

Chairman of the National Assembly of the United Arab Republic, Anwar Sadat. On 5 May he flew to Erevan to take part in celebrations to mark the fortieth anniversary of Soviet Armenia. He had never visited this mountain Republic before and took a great deal of interest in the places he visited. A few days later he went on to Tbilisi, where forty years of Soviet power in Georgia were being celebrated.

Meanwhile in Washington President Kennedy was holding a succession of meetings with his Cabinet and closest aides in order to determine the broad outlines of the new Administration's foreign policy. The American press devoted hundreds of column inches to discussion of the options that lay before Kennedy. Whether or not the President paid heed to the debate that was being conducted by the journalists, Khrushchev certainly read the most provocative of the articles very attentively. Among the American columnists he singled out Walter Lippmann and James Reston, some of whose articles he considered important enough to be reproduced in *Pravda*. On 5 May, for example, *Pravda* published two articles written by Reston for the *New York Times* – with the reservation that 'the editorial board of *Pravda* cannot, of course, agree with a number of the opinions expressed.' In an article that had appeared on 30 April 1961 Reston had written of Kennedy:

He was like a young prizefighter, toying gracefully with his opponent, jabbing at will and casually waving to the crowd, when suddenly he was hit on the chin. This has hurt him badly. The magic of the first two months has vanished.

In short, he is the author not only of a defeat but of a clumsy defeat, which he has followed with lectures to the press and to the public, as if they were responsible – all this at a time when Richard M. Nixon, whom he defeated by a bare 100,000 votes for the Presidency, is about to start out on a political campaign around the country.

Accordingly, the President cannot merely stand aside and ignore Laos after Cuba. He is, after all, a human being. There is not only the intellectual, analytical, Harvard Kennedy, but the fighting, Boston-Irish political Kennedy, and his friends on Capitol Hill and the mail from the country are crying to him to act. . . .

[Khrushchev] is having a ball. He has us over a barrel in Laos: he has made us look foolish in Cuba. France is batting down the insurrectionists and the whole West looks slightly mushy and a little silly. Naturally, Khrushchev would like to exploit his advantage.

The only trouble is that Hitler thought like this too. The Rhineland, Austria, Danzig, Czechoslovakia – all went well for him until the lights



Above: Meeting Fidel Castro at the UN in New York, 1960.

Below: Denouncing Dag Hammarskjöld at the UN, 3 October 1960.





*Left: Press conference in New York, 1960.
Above: In coolie hat, 1960.*





Left: Khrushchev is applauded at the Twenty-Second Party Congress, October 1961. Centre right is Mikhail Suslov.

Above: Khrushchev's giant portrait replaces Stalin's at a party at the Soviet Embassy in Washington, November 1961. Below: On the rostrum at the opening of the Twenty-Second Party Congress, October 1961.

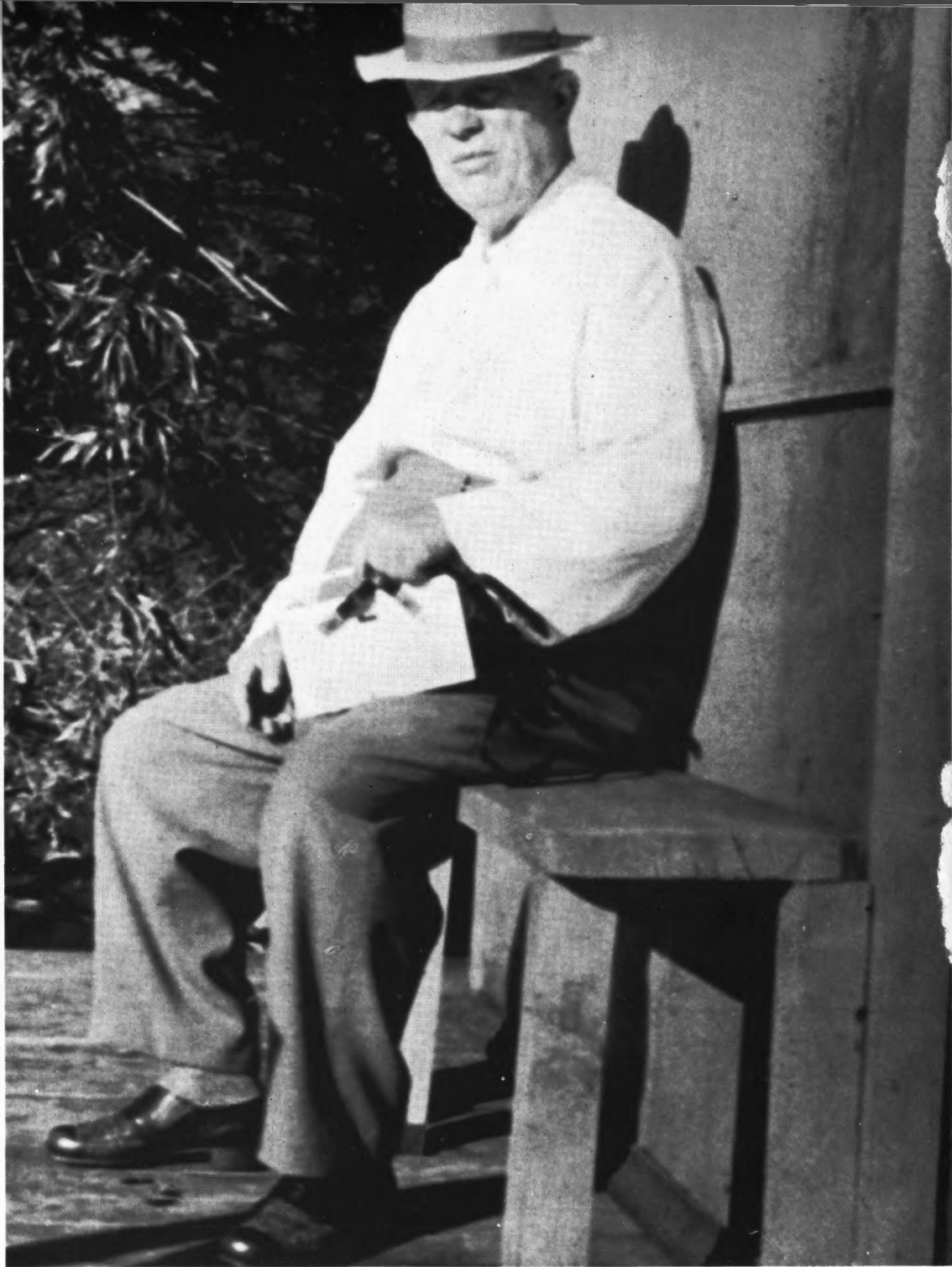


Above: In traditional costume, reading Pravda.

Right Above: Khrushchev with his wife, Nina, at their dacha near Moscow.



Below: Khrushchev's family weep over his open coffin during the funeral at the Novo-Dyevichy Cemetery in Moscow, September 1971. On the right is his granddaughter, Yulia Petrovna, and next to her is his widow, Nina Petrovna Khrushcheva.



In retirement, 1967.

went out. Maybe Khrushchev won't push his luck in the same way, and that is just the danger.

Indeed, Kennedy was under severe pressure, but in conditions that were clearly unfavourable he was in no hurry to take up the challenge. He decided that he should first get to know his principal antagonist on the stage of international politics, and to this end he suggested to Khrushchev that they should meet in some neutral country. Khrushchev agreed to the proposal. An announcement was made that the meeting would take place in Vienna on 3 and 4 June 1961.

Khrushchev left Moscow by train on 27 May. On his way to Austria he spent two days in the Ukraine, visiting Kiev and the grave of Taras Shevchenko at Kanev, and he then went on to Slovakia, where he met Novotny, Czechoslovakia's President. He arrived in Vienna on 2 June. Kennedy had arrived in Europe at the end of May and had had detailed talks with President de Gaulle in Paris and with Britain's Prime Minister, Harold Macmillan, in London.

The two leaders met on the morning of 3 June. Reporting on the meeting, two Soviet journalists, E. Litoshko and M. Podklyuchnikov, wrote:

One cannot close one's eyes to the difficulties and the complexity of the talks now under way in Vienna. The two men who are taking part in them are of a different stamp – their mentality, beliefs, education and traditions are opposed. On one side is the son of a worker, himself a worker, a battle-hardened revolutionary, a staunch Communist, a tireless fighter for peace and for friendship between peoples, the leader of a mighty socialist power. On the other is the son of a millionaire, himself a millionaire, a pious Roman Catholic, a man who represents the interests of his own class, the defender of the policy of the greatest country in the capitalist world.²

During the course of that day and the next Khrushchev and Kennedy met several times. Their meetings were not formal negotiations; when they concluded not only was no agreement signed, but no communiqué was even issued. As both men later acknowledged, the meetings took place in a friendly atmosphere, and both statesmen advanced their views frankly but civilly. A few days later, speaking on American television, Kennedy said:

I went to Vienna to meet the leader of the Soviet Union, Mr Khrushchev. For two days we met in sober, intensive conversation, and I believe it is

my obligation to the people, to the Congress and to our allies to report on those conversations candidly and publicly.

Mr Khrushchev and I had a very full and frank exchange of views on the major issues that now divide our two countries. I will tell you now that it was a very sober two days. There was no discourtesy, no loss of tempers, no threats or ultimatums by either side; no advantage or concession was either gained or given; no major decision was either planned or taken; no spectacular progress was either achieved or pretended.³

In the light of subsequent events, however, it is clear that Khrushchev and Kennedy did not understand each other very well. Each man underestimated his opponent. They became acquainted not through polite discussions in Vienna but through two international crises – the Berlin crisis of 1961 and the Cuban crisis of 1962.

One of the problematic issues aired by Khrushchev and Kennedy in Vienna was that of the two German states and West Berlin. Kennedy insisted that the security of the West was inextricably linked with the security of the Federal Republic and West Berlin; a Western presence in Berlin and complete freedom of access to the city were essential. The President said later:

I made it clear to Mr Khrushchev that the security of Western Europe, and therefore our own security, are deeply involved with our presence in Berlin, and therefore our access rights are based on law and not on sufferance, and that we are determined to maintain those rights at any risk. . . .

Yet less than two months after the Vienna meeting the Berlin crisis broke out.

Briefly, the essence of the problem was this. Although sixteen years had passed since Germany's surrender, no peace treaty with Germany had yet been signed. This meant that the new western frontiers of the USSR, those with Poland and Czechoslovakia, had not been ratified. At the end of the 1940s two German states, with quite different political systems, had been carved out of the territory that had constituted a unitary state since 1871. The Federal Republic of Germany in the west became an integral part of the Atlantic alliance and a member of NATO. The Democratic Republic in the east joined the socialist camp and was admitted to membership of the Warsaw Pact. Neither state, however, had been accorded unequivocal international recognition; neither had been granted membership of the United Nations Organiza-

tion. The USSR had established diplomatic relations with the Federal Republic, but these relations were strained, particularly because the Christian Democratic Party, then in power in the Republic, refused to recognize the new frontiers. The principal Western nations had not taken steps to establish diplomatic relations with the German Democratic Republic.

Extremely complicated relations also existed between the two German states. Formally, neither recognized the other, and they were locked in ideological battle; yet the two states were separated only by the 'sectoral' frontiers that had been determined by the Allies when Germany was divided into occupied zones. These frontiers presented no obstacle to the movement of the German people from one state to the other. Berlin too was divided only by the frontiers between the sectors. The two parts of the city were linked by an integrated transport system and municipal economy. Many of those who lived in West Berlin worked in East Berlin, and many East Berliners travelled to work in the West each day. No passes were required for movement from one zone to the other.

This situation created more difficulties for East than for West Germany. What was now the German Democratic Republic had suffered more severely during the war, and even before 1939 its industry had been less highly developed than that of western Germany. Furthermore, the burden of war reparations fell more heavily on the Democratic Republic; consequently, the standard of living there was lower than in the Federal Republic. When former capitalists, big landowners or even a section of the rich peasantry emigrated to the West, dissatisfied with the social changes that were taking place in the Democratic Republic, the East German Government could note the defections with equanimity; the departure of highly qualified specialists and skilled workers was another matter, however. In the case of certain institutions of higher education as many as a third of all graduates departed for the Federal Republic as soon as they had completed their studies – a serious loss for the young East German state.

There was another aspect to the problem. As in all the other socialist states, in the Democratic Republic the prices of many consumer goods, especially basic foodstuffs, children's toys, books and so on, were low, as they were subsidized out of the state budget. Thousands of people who lived in the West regularly shopped for bargains in the East, and their purchases struck a blow at the economy of the Democratic Republic.

Berlin posed a particular problem. After the war ended supreme

power in the city was wielded by the military commanders of the Soviet Union, the USA, Britain and France. When the Democratic Republic came into being she declared East Berlin her capital. The Federal Republic could not take similar action because West Berlin was isolated within the territory of East Germany. Nevertheless, the Federal Republic claimed that West Berlin formed part of the West German state, with all the rights of one of its constituent *Länder*, and the claim was enshrined in Article 23 of the Federal Republic's Constitution. The majority of the population of West Berlin supported the claim. Furthermore, some of the Federal Republic's institutions were located in West Berlin; the political parties of the West were represented there; and the legal system of the Western sector of the city was identical with that of the Federal Republic. Economically and culturally, West Berlin was certainly part of West Germany. Yet the legal status of the city was less clearly defined. West Berlin sent no representatives to the Bundestag, for example, and the Western powers, when approving the Constitutions of the Federal Republic and of West Berlin, noted the special status of the Western sector of the city. While they regarded it as a part of the Western world, they did not give their unqualified support to the Federal Republic's claim to sovereignty.

Khrushchev proposed to cut this Gordian knot. He called on the Western powers to sign with the two Germanies a peace treaty that recognized the *de facto* frontiers. As for West Berlin, he suggested that it be declared a self-governing, 'free' city, whose integrity and links with the outside world should be guaranteed by the great powers. These proposals were rejected by the Western states. Khrushchev then announced that if the West were to persist in repudiating Soviet suggestions, the USSR and her allies would sign a separate treaty with one of the German states (with the Democratic Republic, that is) and then cede, unilaterally, her rights as an occupying power. As a precedent, he cited the peace treaty that had recently been concluded in San Francisco between Japan, the USA and certain other states but not signed by the USSR, China, India, Mongolia or Burma, all of whom had also fought against Japan in the Second World War.

The Western powers were greatly perturbed by this prospect. Hitherto the link with West Berlin had been guaranteed by the Soviet authorities, not by those of the Democratic Republic, which had established diplomatic relations with few Western nations. The proposition that the Democratic Republic should be empowered to grant or withhold permission for the USA, Britain and France to control West Berlin seemed to them humiliating, unacceptable. Hawkish

voices were heard: if the USSR were to withdraw, the Western powers would have to 'force their way through to West Berlin'. Any change in the *status quo* threatened to bring in its wake incalculable international complications.

The meeting with Kennedy in Vienna had indicated to Khrushchev that the question of a peace treaty would not be settled quickly. However, he concluded that the Soviet Union could exert a certain amount of pressure in order to help the Democratic Republic of Germany to establish strict control over her frontiers.

The German question was the theme of a number of Khrushchev's public speeches at the time. At an evening function at the Kremlin that was held to honour graduates of the military academies, he said: 'We shall sign a peace treaty, but we shall instruct our armed forces that any aggressor who lifts his hand against the Soviet Union or any of her friends is to receive a fitting rebuke.'⁴

On 3 August 1961 the Soviet Government sent a note to the Governments of the USA, Britain and France that contained a demand amounting almost to an ultimatum: 'The question of concluding a peace treaty with Germany and of regulating, in the light of that treaty, the situation in West Berlin must be settled, one way or another, *before this year is out*.'⁵ On 7 August Khrushchev appeared on Soviet television. He referred to the Western powers' declaration that their access to West Berlin was not subject to the authority of the Democratic Republic of Germany and, furthermore, that permission to enter that sector of the city would not be sought. As he pointed out the dangers of the situation, Khrushchev warned that the Soviet Union might well increase the number of the forces stationed on her western frontiers and might call up reservists in order to bring the army up to full strength. The Soviet officers who had protested against a recent commitment to reduce the armed forces by a third were vindicated: Khrushchev did not even mention that measure.

Among the nations of the West, already tense, Khrushchev's speech spread acute alarm. All NATO forces were alerted. Meanwhile, in Moscow representatives of the Warsaw Pact countries held a brief conference. The Democratic Republic of Germany was urged to establish on her frontiers such order as would 'pre-empt subversive activity directed against the countries of the socialist camp'. The Government of the Democratic Republic was no longer under constraint. On 12 August her Council of Ministers decided to impose strict control over the frontiers of the state: the border between the two Germanies was closed, and all frontier posts were placed under rigorous supervision; a

special pass was issued to those who were permitted to cross the border in either direction. Moreover, around the whole of West Berlin was erected a high wall that was topped by barbed wire and punctuated by a small number of authorized access points at which passes were required to be shown, and the city's entire transport system was reorganized.

These new controls provoked stormy protest in the West. Kennedy summoned his advisers for urgent consultations. The American Vice-President, Lyndon Johnson, flew to West Berlin. West Berliners made several attempts to tear down the wall, but it was immediately rebuilt. NATO forces advanced further to the east, and Warsaw Pact forces moved west. In Berlin itself American tanks were lined up on one side of the wall and Soviet tanks on the other. The world was poised on the brink of another war.

Gradually, however, the threat of war receded. The Western powers were forced to acknowledge the existence not only of strict border controls but also of the Berlin wall; the German Democratic Republic, on the other hand, which continued to implement the new security measures uncompromisingly, did not interfere with the links between the West and West Berlin. And Khrushchev refrained from carrying out his threat to sign a peace treaty with the Democratic Republic before the end of the year. He 'extended' the deadline on several occasions, then ceased altogether to speak of a separate peace treaty. To this day no such treaty has been signed.

For a few months East and West settled back into their customary state of polite distrust and wary *bonhomie*.

At the beginning of July 1962 a military delegation from Cuba arrived in Moscow, headed by Raúl Castro, brother of Fidel. Talks between the delegation and Soviet military leaders lasted for more than a week. The subject was the provision of military aid to Cuba and the secondment of a number of Soviet military specialists. It was presumably during that week that the decision was taken to send to Cuba medium-range missiles with nuclear warheads and bombers capable of carrying atomic bombs.

Khrushchev attended the talks on 3 and 8 July. While the necessary equipment was being marshalled, ready for dispatch to Cuba, and Soviet ships were setting out on their long voyage laden with a deadly cargo, the Soviet leader left Moscow for his longest tour of the USSR since he had come to power. One of its purposes was to distract the attention of the West. . . .

Khrushchev covered a great deal of territory. He went north to the Karelo-Finnish Autonomous SSR and to Murmansk oblast, where he visited the largest building sites in the Arctic Circle. He also inspected the fishing fleet and attended some exercises of the Northern Fleet in which nuclear-powered submarines were participating. From Murmansk he flew to Archangel. Then his travels took him south. He spent a day in his native Kalinovka and was so pleased with the progress of the Kalinovka collective farm that he invited Podgorny and Shcherbitsky from the Ukraine and Polyansky from Moscow to come and inspect it. From there he moved on to the Ukraine in order to be present at the inauguration ceremony of the Kremenchug hydro-electric scheme on the Dnieper. By the beginning of August he was installed in the state dacha in the Crimea.

Naturally, affairs of state preoccupied him even when he was on holiday. During that month he received and held long talks with King Muhammad Zahir Shah of Afghanistan; Walter Ulbricht stayed with him for a time, as did U Thant, acting Secretary-General of the United Nations; and two visitors from Cuba – Ernesto 'Che' Guevara and E. Aragonez – arrived to pay him a visit. At the end of August he transferred from the Crimea to the state dacha near Gagri, where he held talks with the American Secretary of the Interior, Stewart Udall, and the poet Robert Frost.

On 15 September Khrushchev returned to Moscow briefly. A few days later he left again for Turkmenia, Tadzhikistan and Uzbekistan. It was not until a month later that he touched down again in Moscow – and by that time the Soviet missiles had arrived in Cuba. Launching pads were being hastily constructed, and L-28 bombers were being assembled from the parts that had been shipped from the Soviet Union.

The USA's political leadership was disturbed by information that was reaching it about the military aid that Cuba was receiving from the USSR. Surveillance of Cuba was stepped up. Military intelligence reports confirmed that launching pads for Soviet guided anti-aircraft missiles were indeed being erected in Cuba. In fact, these missiles were defensive weapons, and the large-scale construction that could be observed from the air was connected with a new harbour to meet the needs of the Cuban fishing industry, but American intelligence concluded that what was being constructed was a major shipyard and base for Soviet submarines. The American Government expressed its concern to the Soviet Ambassador, A. Dobrynin. Forty-five US warships and 10,000 Marines took part in manoeuvres in the vicinity of Cuba. American U-2 reconnaissance aircraft overflew Cuba with increasing

regularity but at a height that did not violate the island's airspace. President Kennedy requested Congress to authorize him to call up 150,000 reservists. On 4 September he issued a warning that in no circumstances would the USA tolerate the setting up of ground-to-ground missiles or any other form of offensive weapon in Cuba.

The warning was ignored: the nature of the Soviet shipments to Cuba had changed. In supplying missiles and bombers to Cuba the Soviet Union was not contravening international law. Cuba was an independent and sovereign state. She had the right to ask the USSR for military aid, and the Soviet Union had every right to grant such aid; its scope and nature was a matter for discussion between these two states alone. The USA had not sought permission from the Soviet Union when she established military bases on the territory of Japan, West Germany, Iran, Turkey, Italy, Norway and many other countries. Some of these bases were close to the borders of the USSR; furthermore, they were equipped with facilities for launching missiles with nuclear warheads. True, Khrushchev had said more than once that the Soviet Union needed no rocket bases on foreign territory, since inter-continental missiles launched from Soviet territory could reach any specified target in the USA. But military specialists could argue with justice that in any nuclear war advantage would be calculated in minutes rather than hours. A Soviet missile fired from Soviet territory would take between twenty and twenty-five minutes to reach the USA, whereas an American missile launched from Turkey, say, could make a strike in the western Soviet Union within five or six minutes. The erection of ground-to-ground missiles in Cuba – less than 150 kilometres from the shores of the USA – would redress the imbalance between the two powers.

Khrushchev and his military advisers underestimated both the resolve of the USA and her capacity to pre-empt co-operation between Cuba and the USSR. The Monroe Doctrine – 'America for the Americans' – still held sway in American political and military circles.⁶ No European state recognized the Doctrine as a principle of international law, of course; much less was it acknowledged by Cuba, which had only recently escaped from semi-colonial dependence on the USA. But the American leadership was quite prepared to invoke an ancient shibboleth and risk war with the Soviet Union.

Moscow ignored the American President's *démarche* and the manoeuvres of the US Navy. Throughout September Soviet ships continued to transport arms and equipment to Cuba. The Soviet Ambassador to Washington requested Robert Kennedy to reassure the American Government: no ground-to-ground missiles would be posi-

tioned in Cuba. On 12 September the following Tass communiqué was issued:

The Government of the Soviet Union has authorized Tass to state that there is no need for the Soviet Union to site defensive weapons – weapons designed to administer retaliatory blows – in any other country (Cuba, for instance). Our nuclear weapons are so devastating, and the rockets that would carry our warheads so powerful, that we do not need to search for suitable sites for them outside the Soviet Union.

A personal message from Khrushchev to Kennedy, dispatched at the same time, reaffirmed this claim. Both statements were camouflage, just as Khrushchev's long absence from Moscow had been.

At the end of September and the beginning of October poor weather conditions prevented American U-2s from maintaining their constant surveillance of Cuba, where work on the launching pads and the missiles proceeded with all speed. Khrushchev and Castro calculated that it would be complete before American intelligence could confirm the nature of the 'defensive weapons' that were now at Cuba's disposal. Khrushchev's memoirs are quite candid: 'By then we had installed enough missiles to destroy New York, Chicago and other huge industrial cities – let alone a little village like Washington.'

It was not until 16 October, when the surveillance of Cuba was resumed, that American experts concluded that a rocket base was being built in the San Cristobal area – and not an anti-aircraft base but one designed for ground-to-ground missiles capable of carrying nuclear weapons. Surveillance was intensified, and on 17 October the members of the recently constituted Executive Committee of the National Security Council were able to make out several new launching pads, on each of which sixteen or thirty-two missiles were poised in readiness – missiles with a range, the experts decided, of more than 1,600 kilometres. No one on Kennedy's staff was in any doubt about the threat: there was a unanimous call for action. The only issue over which experts disagreed was the question of the most appropriate retaliatory measure to adopt. President Kennedy and his brother favoured a complete maritime blockade of Cuba. Military leaders, on the other hand, advocated massive bombardment of all the launching pads. They argued that while the blockade might arrest the shipment of any further missiles to Cuba, it could not prevent the emplacement of those missiles that were already on the island. While the argument was going on, American troops and aircraft were taking up positions

as near to Cuba as possible. In the end, President Kennedy decided on a blockade. The CIA's photographs were convincing enough evidence for American experts, he felt, but as the Soviet Union continued to insist that there were no offensive missiles in Cuba, a sudden air attack on military targets on the island by American forces might undermine the moral authority of the USA in the eyes of the rest of the world.

Kennedy informed most of the Latin American heads of state and his allies in NATO of his plans. An armada composed of 180 US vessels assembled in the Caribbean. Relays of B-52 bombers were ordered to take off from all American bases with full loads of nuclear bombs. As soon as one of them landed for rest and refuelling, another was instantly to take its place in the air. Six army divisions were moved to Florida and placed on constant alert. The US military base at Guantanamo in Cuba was reinforced. On 22 October President Kennedy spoke to the American nation on television. To his shaken audience he explained how the situation in Cuba had developed, and he gave his reasons for ordering a complete blockade of the island. He emphasized that the blockade was merely a preliminary step: he had ordered the Pentagon to make all necessary preparations for further military action, which might entail not only the bombardment but also the occupation of Cuba. The American Minister of War, Robert Macnamara, calculated that the expedition would require 250,000 soldiers, 90,000 Marines and airborne troops and more than a hundred ships.

Khrushchev learned of Kennedy's speech at once, of course, though on 23 October the Soviet press carried no reports of what the American President had said or of the blockade of Cuba. Khrushchev conferred with his advisers. The Soviet missiles in Cuba were not yet deployable – it would be some days before work on them was complete. He certainly wanted a powerful rocket base in Cuba, but he was anxious to avoid war. He had to ascertain whether the USA was bluffing or was really prepared to strike a blow at Cuba.

Later that day the Soviet Minister of Defence ordered that the armed forces of the USSR be placed on alert. All leave was cancelled, and the demobilization of older members of the forces was suspended. The Soviet Government issued a statement containing a strong protest against the blockade of Cuba and the other military measures that had been taken by the USA and a further denial that there were any offensive weapons in Cuba. The statement read: 'The United States is demanding that military equipment that Cuba needs for the purposes of self-defence should be removed from Cuban territory – a require-

ment that, naturally, no state that values its independence can meet.' The Soviet Union also demanded an immediate meeting of the UN Security Council. According to the Soviet press, when the meeting convened the USSR's representative, V. Zorin, 'exposed the fiction of the so-called "discovery of Soviet rocket bases" in Cuba concocted by State Department officials'. Meanwhile Cuban forces were mobilized, and the Soviet specialists on the island were instructed to expedite the installation of the rockets. Soviet ships on course for Cuba drew closer to the line of the American blockade. Outwardly, Khrushchev remained calm and even attended a performance at the Bolshoi, fully aware that on the other side of the world his every move was being followed closely.

President Kennedy sent Khrushchev a message in which he urged the Soviet leader to respect the blockade. He wrote that the USA had no intention of firing on Soviet ships: 'I am concerned that we both show prudence and do nothing to allow events to make the situation more difficult to control than it is.' This message was not published in the USSR, but the Soviet press did carry reports of U Thant's appeal to the Soviet Union to halt the transport of arms to Cuba. A similar appeal was addressed to Khrushchev by the British philosopher Bertrand Russell. American intelligence informed Kennedy that Soviet submarines had been sighted in the Caribbean, posing a serious threat to American aircraft carriers.

The line of the blockade was drawn at a distance of 800 kilometres from Cuba's shores. On the morning of 24 October two Soviet vessels approached the blockade. They were escorted by a submarine. Facing them was the aircraft carrier *Essex*, with helicopters on board that were equipped to deal with submarines. Macnamara gave the order: if necessary, the helicopters were to attack the submarine with light depth-charges so that it would be forced to surface. Khrushchev was not prepared to take this risk. He ordered the ships to stop at the line of blockade and to await further instructions. Then he sent a telegram to Kennedy proposing a summit meeting. Kennedy replied that he was ready to meet Khrushchev – but only after the Soviet missiles had been removed from Cuba. He had no option: aerial reconnaissance had revealed that some of the rocket installations would be operational within a few days. Twice daily a squadron of eight American aircraft flew low over Cuba. Others hovered constantly over the Soviet submarines.

More Soviet ships reached the blockade and halted. In Cuba work on the installations and IL-28 bombers continued day and night. At the

instigation of the Soviet Government Mikoyan flew to Havana. His task was to analyse the situation at close quarters and to co-ordinate the activities of the Soviet and Cuban Governments. Khrushchev was afraid that Castro might take some impetuous step.

Almost every day Kennedy received a message from Khrushchev. The tone of the first had been threatening. The Soviet leader had called Kennedy's action 'outright banditry or, if you like, the folly of degenerate imperialism', and he had declared that Soviet ships would ignore the blockade, since the USSR possessed all that she needed 'to protect her rights'. But the tenor of the messages altered after Friday, 26 October, when Kennedy ordered American armed forces to prepare for the invasion of Cuba and stepped up the number of aircraft that were overflying the island. That evening Kennedy received another message from Khrushchev, couched in very different terms. This letter was not published in the Soviet press. It had been dictated personally by the Soviet leader and not even edited before dispatch. Khrushchev was now convinced that the USA was not bluffing and that the world was teetering on the edge of an abyss. He urged Kennedy to show restraint, for 'if war should indeed break out, it would not be in our power to stop it. . . . I have participated in two world wars and know that war ends only when it has carved its way across cities and villages, bringing death and destruction in its wake.' Khrushchev no longer denied that the weapons that had been installed in Cuba were offensive. He argued that the American blockade was pointless, since the missiles were already in place, but he assured Kennedy that they were under the control of Soviet officers and would be used not to attack the USA but to defend Cuba in the event of invasion. He wrote:

You can be confident that we are quite sane and understand clearly that if we attack you, you will retaliate. But we will match you, blow for blow. And I believe that you are fully aware of this, which indicates that we are normal people, that we understand the position and can assess the situation accurately. Why, then, should we court disaster, as you seem to imagine we are doing? Only a lunatic or suicide would do that, someone bent on his own destruction and that of the world before he dies.

Khrushchev proposed that if President Kennedy would undertake to lift the blockade of Cuba and withdraw his threat to invade the island, the Soviet Union would remove or destroy the missiles that had been installed there.

We must not tug at the ends of the rope in which you have tied the knot of war, because the harder we both pull, the tighter the knot will become. And a time may come when the knot is so tight that even he who tied it will not have the strength to undo it – and then the rope itself will have to be cut. Let us not simply slacken the rope; let us also take measures to undo the knot. We are ready for that.⁸

This was a first step towards compromise – though next morning Khrushchev sent Kennedy another message in which he demanded the removal of American missiles from Turkey and proposed negotiations on all these matters in the course of the following two or three weeks. That did not suit Kennedy, who ignored the second letter and replied only to the first. He wrote that the USA was ready to lift the blockade of Cuba and that she had no intention of attacking the island provided that all offensive weapons were removed. Through other channels Kennedy assured Khrushchev that American missiles in Turkey would be dismantled – but the question of the Cuban installations was non-negotiable: work on them must cease forthwith, and they should be removed under the supervision of the UN.

Kennedy's message was published in the Soviet press – which was tantamount to an acknowledgement that there were Soviet offensive weapons in Cuba. Khrushchev accepted Kennedy's proposal. In a letter dated 28 October he wrote: 'I have every sympathy with your concern and that of the American people about the weapons that you describe as offensive, which are formidable weapons indeed. Both of us understand what kind of weapons they are.'⁹ He went on to say that as soon as the USA had declared that she would not attack Cuba the USSR no longer had any reason for supplying the island with weapons. Consequently, the Soviet Government had ordered that the weapons in question should be dismantled, crated and returned to the USSR.

The crisis was over. The exchange of messages between Khrushchev and Kennedy had taken place over the head of Castro, who had been informed of what was going on by Mikoyan. The Cuban leader did not consider the American guarantees adequate, however; he demanded both that the trade embargo imposed by the USA should be lifted and that American surveillance of Cuba should end. It took all Mikoyan's diplomatic skill to persuade Castro to acquiesce in the Soviet Union's conciliatory initiatives.

Even the USA's stipulation that the UN should supervise the removal of the Cuban missiles, which might have raised insuperable problems, was not permitted to ruffle the tenuous calm. At that time all

the UN's missile experts happened to be Americans. In order to demonstrate how sincerely he desired peace, Khrushchev agreed to permit these experts to inspect the Soviet ships that were to transport the dismantled missiles back to the USSR from Cuba and to count the crates in their holds.

It would be fruitless to debate the question of whether Khrushchev lost this round to Kennedy – of whether or not the withdrawal of the missiles was a humiliation for the Soviet Union. The American press did not take this line; nor did Kennedy claim the outcome as a victory for himself. Both leaders, and their advisers, were guilty of precipitating the crisis; both showed admirable restraint and maintained strict control over events so that the crisis should not develop into a devastating war. In the USA there were many highly placed politicians and aides who had advocated, from the start, actions that could only have led to war; it is probable that among those who surrounded Khrushchev too there were those who did not agree with his decision to withdraw the missiles from Cuba. If Kennedy's stock rose markedly after the Cuban crisis, Khrushchev too was regarded with admiration. Both sides made concessions; both strove for compromise.

However, it should not be forgotten that the decisive step in the defusing of the crisis, the Soviet Union's undertaking to dismantle and remove the missiles and IL-28 bombers, was taken less than twenty-four hours before the time fixed by the Pentagon for an attack on Cuba by American sea, air and land forces. The attack would have devastated the island and would have provoked the USSR into taking retaliatory measures. Never before had the post-war world been so close to the brink of catastrophe.

The link between Cuba and the Soviet Union remained firm. Six months later Castro paid a visit to the USSR that lasted for forty days, and throughout his stay Khrushchev treated him with an enthusiastic cordiality that the Soviet leader rarely extended to other foreign statesmen.

On 27 April 1963 the plane from Havana landed not in Moscow but in Murmansk, where Castro was met by Mikoyan. The visitor was shown round the town and taken to inspect the *Lenin*, a huge, nuclear-powered vessel. The next day Castro was given a tumultuous welcome in Moscow. Hundreds of thousands of people came out on to the streets to greet the Cuban leader, who drove to the Kremlin in an open car, accompanied by Khrushchev and Brezhnev, and later attended a meeting held in Red Square. On Labour Day, 1 May, Castro stood with Khrushchev on the tribune of the Lenin Mausoleum as the Soviet

Army paraded past. Then both leaders took a brief holiday and went shooting at Zavidovo, near Moscow, where discussions between them continued. Khrushchev enjoyed the sport and was quite a good shot.

On 5 May Castro began a lengthy tour of the country, during which he visited Uzbekistan, Irkutsk, Sverdlovsk, Leningrad and Kiev. He did not return to Moscow until 23 May, when a great gathering had been organized in the Lenin Stadium to mark Soviet-Cuban friendship. The two leaders issued a long communiqué in which they spoke of extending collaboration between Cuba and the USSR in every field, not excluding the defence of Cuba. The communiqué stated:

In the course of talks between Comrades Nikita Khrushchev and Fidel Castro it was confirmed by the Soviet side that if an attack were made on Cuba, in violation of the commitment entered into by the President of the United States, the Soviet Union would fulfil her international obligation to the fraternal Cuban people and would offer them all the means at her disposal in aid of the defence of the freedom and independence of the Cuban republic. Those who contemplate aggression should take note that an invasion of Cuba will confront mankind with a devastating nuclear war.¹⁰

On 1 June Castro and Khrushchev left Moscow for Georgia, where they spent two days. From Georgia they flew to Murmansk, and there the Cuban premier took his leave of Khrushchev before boarding the TU-114 that had brought him to the Soviet Union nearly six weeks before.

The consolidation of the Soviet Union's relations with Cuba did not preclude a marginal improvement in relations between the USSR and the USA. The Cuban crisis had taught the two nations' leaders an important lesson and had defined more precisely the limits beyond which they could not go without precipitating conflict. It was undoubtedly the Cuban crisis that persuaded Khrushchev to tread warily where the German question was concerned. He was now unwilling to take impulsive steps that might disturb the precarious *status quo*, because to do so might provoke a new crisis, potentially no less dangerous than the Cuban one. His caution was buttressed by a significant event – the signing by the Soviet Union, the USA and Britain of a treaty that imposed on its signatories the obligation to observe a partial ban on the testing of atomic and hydrogen bombs.

Discussions about this issue had been going on for a long time, although little progress had been made. The Soviet Union insisted on

two points: she sought a complete ban on all tests, including those carried out underground, and she required that the treaty be signed by every nation with a nuclear potential. France, however, which had only just assembled a nuclear arsenal of her own, refused to participate in the negotiations. The USA plainly did not want to commit herself to a complete test ban. She therefore proposed on-the-spot inspection of alleged nuclear explosions, knowing full well that the USSR had long ago rejected outright all such proposals. The Soviet Union, for her part, put forward a counter-proposal: she suggested that the USSR should construct automatic seismic stations, the functioning of which could be monitored by the USA and her allies so that on-the-spot inspection would be unnecessary. As an indication of the sincerity of its professed desire for peace and international harmony, as long ago as 1958 the Soviet Government had announced a unilateral ban on the testing of all nuclear weapons, claiming that the USSR would not resume tests unless the USA and Britain did so. These countries followed the example of the Soviet Union. But in 1961, at the height of the Berlin crisis, the USSR was the first to withdraw from this voluntary moratorium. At that time some especially powerful nuclear shells had just been manufactured in the Soviet Union but had not yet been tested. Khrushchev's eagerness to test them and to demonstrate the military might of the USSR prompted him to order a new series of tests, which were to be carried out in the region of Novaya Zemlya in the far north. Academician A. D. Sakharov, who, as one of the creators of the Soviet hydrogen bomb, had taken part in earlier tests of the weapon, later wrote about this event:

From 1957 onwards, under the influence of statements on this subject made by people all over the world, such as Albert Schweitzer, Linus Pauling and some others, my responsibility for the problems caused by radioactive waste as a result of the testing of nuclear weapons began to weigh on me. It is well known that the absorption of the radioactive products of nuclear explosions by thousands of millions of the Earth's inhabitants tends to promote an increase in the incidence of a number of illnesses and in the birth of monsters. Because of the fall-out of the radioactive products of a nuclear explosion in the atmosphere, every megaton claims thousands of unknown victims. And every series of nuclear-weapon tests, whether it be conducted by the USA, the USSR, Britain, China or France, involves dozens of megatons – that is, dozens of thousands of victims. . . . I recall the summer of 1961, when a meeting had been arranged between Khrushchev, the Chairman of the Council of Ministers, and a number of atomic scientists. We were told

that we had to prepare for a new series of tests, which were to provide support for the USSR's policy on the German question (the Berlin wall). I wrote a note to Khrushchev, saying: 'The revival of these tests after the three-year moratorium will be a breach of the test-ban treaty and will check the move towards disarmament: it will lead to a fresh round in the arms race, especially in the sphere of inter-continental missiles and anti-missile defence.' I had this note passed along the rows of seats until it reached him. He put it in his breast pocket and invited all those present to dine with him. As we sat around the table, he made an impromptu speech, which I found memorable because of its frankness; in it he gave expression to something more than merely his own opinion. This, more or less, is what he said: 'Sakharov is a good scientist, but he should leave foreign policy to those of us who are specialists in this subtle art. Strength alone can throw our enemy into confusion. We cannot say out loud that we base our policy on strength, but that is how it has to be. I would be a ditherer and not the Chairman of the Council of Ministers if I were to listen to people like Sakharov.'¹¹

One further test of a super-powerful hydrogen bomb was conducted towards the end of 1962, not long before the Cuban crisis flared up. After this, of course, the USA no longer felt constrained by the voluntary ban, and Kennedy ordered that nuclear tests be resumed. Nevertheless, negotiations continued, and the views of the parties gradually converged. It became evident that even if they could not reach agreement on a total test ban, there was no reason why a partial ban could not be negotiated. In July 1963 an agreement to ban the testing of nuclear weapons in the atmosphere, in space and under water was at last initialled in Moscow. It was an important step. On 5 August the treaty was signed. The signatories were A. Gromyko for the USSR, Secretary of State Dean Rusk for the USA and the Earl of Home for Britain. The ceremony was attended by U Thant, Khrushchev and the ambassadors of many of the countries that had diplomatic missions in Moscow, of whom ten signed the treaty on behalf of their respective countries. By 13 August the treaty bore twenty-seven signatures. By 11 September seventy-seven nations had formally associated themselves with the treaty, which came into force on 10 October 1963, when it was ratified by the Soviet Union, the USA and Britain.

After the signing of the treaty Khrushchev retired to Cape Pitsunda for a holiday. Dean Rusk went there to see him, and they discussed many aspects of Soviet-American relations. Kennedy and Khrushchev were both anxious to pursue a policy of *détente*. Their talks also

covered the situation in Laos and Vietnam, where a new crisis was brewing as the USA made attempts to save the regime in South Vietnam from collapse. Khrushchev reacted coolly to news of American involvement in South-East Asia. He said: 'If you want to, go ahead and fight in the jungles of Vietnam. The French fought there for seven years and still had to quit in the end. Perhaps the Americans will be able to stick it out for a little longer, but eventually they will have to quit too.'

Kennedy hesitated. He came close to deciding to withdraw American troops from Vietnam in order to avoid becoming enmeshed in a war in which China and the North Vietnamese would have the advantage because of the vast populations on which they could draw. But at the end of November 1963 John F. Kennedy was murdered in Dallas. Khrushchev was greatly saddened by his death and later often spoke very warmly of him. The new President of the USA, Lyndon Johnson, took a different view both of the problem of Vietnam and of the whole complex of Soviet-American relations.

The harmony that had existed between the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and the Chinese Communist Party in 1960 proved transitory. By the next year the speech of Chou En-lai, head of the Chinese delegation at the Twenty-Second Congress of the Soviet Communist Party, included a diatribe against the Soviet Central Committee's report. Chou objected to Soviet criticism of the Albanian Party of Labour and made a point of mentioning only the Twenty-First Congress, saying nothing about the Twentieth. Furthermore, Chou flew back to Peking before the Congress had ended, pleading pressure of work. Khrushchev accompanied him to the airport to show that he was anxious to maintain friendly relations with China and with the Chinese Communist Party, but his overtures were ignored: at the first closed session of the Chinese Communist Party Chou described the Twenty-Second Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union as 'revisionist'. The USSR was blamed for the many difficulties under which the Chinese economy was labouring.

In 1962 the dispute between the two Communist Parties was revived but mainly through confidential messages and hints contained in a variety of theoretical articles. By 1963 the controversy had become both more overt and more vitriolic. At the beginning of the year the Chinese newspaper *Renminribao* published a series of articles that impugned the integrity of the Soviet Communist Party. When the latter proposed that the dispute should be resolved it was rebuffed. The

Chinese press began to publish aggressively anti-Soviet articles culled from Albanian newspapers and journals, and a great deal of material that was critical of the Communist Parties of Italy, France, the USA and other countries was also published in China.

The Communist Party of the Soviet Union made one more attempt at reconciliation. Khrushchev suggested a meeting between leaders of the USSR and the Chinese Republic, either at the highest level or at some mutually acceptable lower level. The Chinese agreed to a high-level meeting. However, before the meeting, which was to take place in July 1963, the Chinese leaders issued a detailed document, entitled *Proposals Concerning the General Line of the International Communist Movement*, in which their views on the issues at the heart of the controversy were set out under twenty-five headings. At the time the Soviet press did not publish the contentious document lest its dissemination should jeopardize the forthcoming meeting; however, the Chinese Embassy and a number of other Chinese organizations in the Soviet Union distributed a vast number of copies of the *Proposals* in Russian translation. Khrushchev was very disappointed when the document appeared in Romania – and indeed its publication there was a first step towards the establishment of a special relationship between Romania and the People's Republic of China.

The meeting between representatives of the two Communist Parties, which began in Moscow on 5 July 1963, took place in a hostile atmosphere. The Chinese delegation was headed by Teng Hsiao-ping, General Secretary of the Chinese Communist Party; the Soviet delegation was led by M. A. Suslov, who had assumed responsibility for foreign affairs. When the talks began the Soviet press published the Chinese *Proposals* in full, but simultaneously another document appeared in the newspapers: it was entitled 'An Open Letter from the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union to Party Organizations and all Communists in the USSR', and it contained detailed criticisms of the 'general line' advocated by the Chinese.

As was to be expected, the meeting led to no agreement. On the contrary, talks were suspended on 20 July, at the insistence of the Chinese. The Chinese delegation received a ceremonial welcome when it returned to Peking, where Mao himself was waiting at the airport to greet its members.

The deterioration of inter-Party relations naturally affected all other commerce between the two countries. Trade slackened, and scientific, technological and cultural co-operation shrank almost to vanishing

point. Moreover, on the Sino-Soviet border incidents of one sort or another became more and more frequent. Groups of Chinese herdsmen would cross the frontier deliberately and would refuse to return to China when requested to do so by Soviet frontier guards. The signing of the partial test-ban treaty in Moscow marked a decisive turning-point in the relationship between the two countries. On three occasions – 31 July, 15 August and 1 September 1963 – the Chinese leadership issued censorious statements about the Moscow treaty, which it considered 'a giant fraud calculated to fool the people of the world': 'It opposes diametrically the wishes of the peace-loving people of the world. . . . It is unthinkable that the Chinese Government should be a party to this contemptible chicanery.' In one statement the Chinese Government declared:

The indisputable facts prove that the policy pursued by the Soviet Government is one of alliance with the forces of war to oppose the forces of peace, alliance with imperialism to oppose socialism, alliance with the United States to oppose China and alliance with the reactionaries of all countries to oppose the people of the world.¹²

Such a declaration implied a complete break between the two Communist Parties. The Chinese press was filled with articles that vilified the domestic and foreign policies of the Soviet Union. Khrushchev himself was increasingly the object of this censure; he was generally referred to in the Chinese press as the 'chief revisionist' who was guiding the USSR towards a deal with the imperialists and striving to transform the Soviet Union from a socialist into a capitalist power.

The Party: a Review of its Aims and Administration

On 30 July 1961 all the principal newspapers of the USSR published, for discussion, a draft programme for the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. For several decades the Party had had no clearly defined programme; instead its policies had been determined by the successive resolutions of Party Congresses and Central Committee plenums. The programme that had been adopted by the Russian Communist Party (Bolsheviks) in 1919 had become obsolete within a couple of years, after the civil war had ended and the transition to the New Economic Policy had taken place. The Twenty-Second Party Congress resolved to draw up a new programme for the Party, and the commission that was appointed for this purpose received directives from Khrushchev himself.

This is not the place for a detailed analysis of the principal points of the document that was drafted, which enumerated the Party's many achievements, outlined the future economic and political development of Soviet society and advanced a number of ideological propositions (for example, concerning unity of action among the socialist parties and national liberation movements) that are still valid today. However, it is impossible to ignore the impractical nature of some of the clauses of the draft programme. For one thing, its compilers chose, for no good reason, to specify the number of years that it would take to construct a Communist society in the Soviet Union. Their slogan was: 'The present generation of Soviet people will live under Communism.' From this followed the assertion, enshrined in the programme, that the Party's aim was 'to accomplish, in the main, the building of a Communist society in the USSR within twenty years' – that is, by 1980.

I recall that in the early summer of 1960 I happened to be present at an all-Moscow meeting of those connected with the definition and

dissemination of ideological principles, which was being held in Moscow's Palace of Sport. L. F. Ilyichev, head of the Central Committee's agitprop department, presented a report and then invited questions from the audience. One question was: 'Comrade Ilyichev, could you tell us how long it will take the USSR to construct a Communist society?' The audience burst out laughing. Ilyichev, also smiling, replied that it was important not to adopt an over-simplified approach to the issue. No one was in a position to specify exactly how long it would take to build Communism – it could take forty or fifty years or even longer. A year later the Communist Party programme was prepared to specify the period of construction quite precisely.

Accordingly, the programme outlined some extremely ambitious economic objectives. It proceeded from the premise that over the coming twenty years industry would maintain a rate of development not lower than 10 per cent per annum, that agricultural production would increase substantially each year and that the Soviet Union would consequently overtake the USA, where the increase in industrial production would remain at the level attained in the 1950s, a mere 2.5 per cent per annum. On the basis of such calculations, it followed that by 1970 the Soviet Union would outstrip the USA not only in gross production but also in productivity per head of population. Thus by 1970, if not before, it would be possible to guarantee the material prosperity of every citizen of the USSR, to transform all collective and state farms into highly productive, financially buoyant enterprises, to satisfy the Soviet people's need for well constructed houses and to do away with hard physical labour. It was a wholly unrealistic programme for two Five-Year Plans.

As for the decade of the 1970s, those who had drafted the programme were unfailingly optimistic. They affirmed:

The material and technical basis of Communism will have been established by the end of the second decade [1971–80], ensuring for the whole population an abundance of material and cultural benefits: Soviet society will be almost at the stage at which it could introduce the principle of distribution according to need. . . . Thus a Communist society will, in the main, be constructed in the USSR.¹

Both the programme itself and Khrushchev's report on it went further than simply defining the tasks that were to be accomplished; target production figures were also specified. Hence a comparison is possible between the predictions of the programme and the actual

*Industrial production in the Soviet Union: actual and projected output,
1960 and 1980*

<i>Product</i>	<i>1960</i>	<i>22nd Party Congress targets</i>	<i>1980</i>
Electric power (milliard kw)	292	2,700–3,000	1,295
Steel (million tonnes)	65.3	250	148
Oil (million tonnes)	148	690–710	603
Gas (milliard cubic metres)	47	680–720	435
Coal (million tonnes)	513	1,200	716
Mineral fertilizers (million tonnes, conventional units)	13.9	125–135	104
Synthetic resins and plastics (thousand tonnes)	332	19,000–21,000	3,600
Artificial and synthetic fibres (million square metres)	211	3,100–3,300	1,200
Cement (million tonnes)	45.5	233–235	125
Textiles, all kinds (milliard square metres)	6.6	20–22	10.7
Leather footwear (million pairs)	419	900–1,000	744

Source: XXII-ys'ezd KPSS: Stenografichesky otchet (Stenographic Report of the 22nd Congress of the CPSU), Moscow, 1961, vol. 1, pp. 170–1, and 'Statement by the USSR Central Statistical Board on the Results of the Fulfilment of the Plan in 1980', Ekonomicheskaya Gazeta, no. 5, 1981, p. 11.

achievements of the Soviet Union up to 1980 (see table). From the figures it is apparent that during those twenty years the economy of the USSR expanded considerably. Given a more favourable climate abroad and wiser direction at home, progress might have been even speedier. However, the targets outlined in the draft programme were over-ambitious and wildly optimistic – and comment on Khrushchev's mistaken estimate of the likely levels of industrial and agricultural productivity in the capitalist world would be superfluous.

The Twenty-Second Party Congress also adopted new rules governing the organization of the Party. In essence they differed little from the old ones, but there was one Article that, in the opinion of many observers, contributed to the erosion of Khrushchev's relationship with Party functionaries. It certainly provoked discontent, particularly among middle-ranking Party cadres. The Article in question, Number 25, read as follows:

The principle of systematic revision of the composition of Party bodies and of the continuity of leadership shall be observed in the election of those bodies.

At each regular election not less than one quarter of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and its Presidium shall be subject to re-election. Members of the Presidium shall not, as a rule, be elected for more than three successive terms. Certain Party officials, by virtue of their generally acknowledged prestige, outstanding political and organizational skills and other notable qualities, may be elected to membership of leading bodies for longer periods. In such cases a candidate shall be regarded as having been duly elected if no fewer than three-quarters of the votes in a secret ballot are cast for him.

The composition of the Central Committee of the Communist Parties of the Union Republics and of the territorial and regional Party committees shall be renewed by not less than one-third at each regular election; the composition of the area, city and district Party committees and of the committees or bureaux of basic Party organizations by a half. Furthermore, members of these leading Party bodies may be elected successively for not more than three terms and the secretaries of basic Party organizations for not more than two terms.

A Party meeting, conference or congress may, in consideration of the political and professional qualities of an individual, elect him to a leading body for a longer period. In such cases a candidate is regarded as having been duly elected if no fewer than three-quarters of the Communists attending the meeting vote for him.

Party members who are not re-elected to a leading Party organ as a

consequence of the expiry of their term of office may be re-elected at subsequent elections.²

The incorporation in the Party rules of the principle of systematic re-election was both just and appropriate. It meant, however, that Party officials at all levels could no longer regard their occupation as a lifelong career and privilege. They now all had to accept the fact that they would have to seek and adjust to other work at some point. But the middle-ranking Party cadres were particularly hard-hit by the new prescriptions. While Party Congresses took place every five years, so that the maximum period during which an official could remain a member of the Central Committee or of its Presidium was fifteen years, elections to raikoms, gorkoms and obkoms were to be held, according to the rules, every two years. Consequently, membership of one of these bodies, or of its bureau, was restricted to six years. Naturally, officials on the lower echelons of the Party viewed Article Number 25 with disfavour.

Nevertheless, the new rules were adopted by the Twenty-Second Congress, and elections were held in accordance with their provisions. As a result, the composition of the Central Committee and of the Presidium changed considerably. Three members of the Presidium, A. B. Aristov, N. G. Ignatov and E. A. Furtseva, lost their seats. Among the new members was G. I. Voronov, who was joined a little later by A. P. Kirilenko. Of the former members of the Secretariat, only Khrushchev, Suslov and Kozlov were left. The newly elected secretaries of the Central Committee were P. N. Demichev, A. N. Shelepin, L. F. Ilyichev and B. N. Ponomarev.

A few months after the Party Congress the new Supreme Soviet confirmed the membership of the reconstituted Council of Ministers of the USSR, which was twice as large as before, its numbers swollen by representatives of the many State Committees that had been formed since 1958. These State Committees, whose remit was to supervise various branches of industry, had assumed almost all the functions of the former Ministries. Among others, the following changes had taken place: the former Secretary of the Central Committee of the Komsomol, V. E. Semichastny, had replaced Shelepin as Minister in charge of the KGB, and K. G. Pysin had been appointed Minister of Agriculture in place of Olshansky.

The Supreme Soviet announced one further decision: a new Constitution for the Soviet Union was to be drafted as a substitute for the 'Stalin' Constitution of 1936.

During October 1962 Khrushchev was wholly preoccupied by foreign policy. No sooner had the discomfiture of the Cuban crisis receded into the past, however, than he convened a plenum of the Central Committee in order to discuss certain radical reforms that would affect the leadership of the Party. What Khrushchev proposed turned out to be one of the most unpopular of his measures, and it stirred up the resentment of many obkom secretaries who had previously supported all his initiatives. Nevertheless, at the time among the members of the Presidium and the Central Committee only V. V. Shcherbitsky objected to the proposed reorganization, which was sanctioned and implemented without delay.

The essence of the reform was the reconstruction of the entire Party leadership in conformity with the requirements of production alone as opposed to those of both territory and production, which was the principle that had prevailed since the early years of the Party. Henceforth the Party's obkoms, which had hitherto concerned themselves with every aspect of the life of an oblast, were to be split into two halves – one responsible for industry and the other charged with the supervision of agriculture.

From the very first, the shortcomings of the new system were manifest. For example, agricultural obkoms were instructed to assume responsibility not only for the Communists working on collective and state farms and the administrative bodies that supervised them but also for all those who worked in factories that served the farms or processed agricultural produce. Yet the teachers' training colleges that prepared teachers for work in both urban and rural schools, the communal garages that also serviced the grain elevators and the factories in which packaging was manufactured all fell within the province of the industrial obkoms. Furthermore, if the secretary of an agricultural obkom wished to organize a conference for agricultural workers at the oblast centre, he was obliged to confer with the secretary of the industrial obkom; similarly, if the secretary of an industrial obkom was anxious to increase the supply of vegetables to the towns, he had to negotiate with his opposite number in the agricultural obkom. When it came to the harvest countless difficulties arose in connection with the organization of transport and the nomination of those townspeople who were to help on the farms.

There were some guidelines for the division of labour between the two obkoms in each oblast, and an accommodation might have been feasible had it not been for the additional complication of the formation of two oblispolkoms in each oblast, which entailed the establish-

ment of two public health departments, two education departments, two finance departments, two cultural departments, two militias and so on. The number of officials at each oblast centre increased, and their work became more taxing.

The reforms were instituted in all the Union Republics, where besides the general bureaux of the Central Committee there were now Central Committee bureaux for industry and agriculture, each of which had its own Party apparatus. The secretary of a large rural raikom was no longer master of his raion if it contained industrial enterprises – the Communists who worked in these came under the jurisdiction of the industrial raikom for the zone, which usually had its headquarters in a different administrative centre.

The list of problems that emerged as a result of the reorganization of the Party leadership in accordance with the principle of production could be extended considerably – and the complexity of the system did not end there. At the November plenum of the Central Committee a further decision was taken: the Sovnarkhozes were to be strengthened. In the course of the few years of their existence their defects had become transparent. The lines of demarcation between the departments had not disappeared, although they were now drawn not between different Ministries but between different administrative systems within each Sovnarkhoz. The management of related enterprises in different oblasts had deteriorated, and the implementation of a homogeneous technological policy throughout the country had become impracticable. The Central Committee now proposed the amalgamation of a number of Sovnarkhozes and the formation of an all-Union Sovnarkhoz, the function of which would be to co-ordinate the activities of all the others. It was authorized only to supervise industry, however; it could not regulate local communications, transport, construction, public services, electric power stations and several other areas of local administrative concern. Consequently, yet another Sovnarkhoz was established in Moscow – a Supreme Economic Council.

That was still not the last of the series of reforms. The end of 1962 saw the formation of several new State Committees – those for electrical engineering, light industry, the food industry and trade – and the establishment of all-Union organizations charged with the supervision of supply work. Altogether the structure of the administration of Party and country had become so complicated that officials were obliged to refer to charts that were displayed in the entrance halls of institutions across the country.

The same Central Committee plenum decided on the reconstruction of the system of state and Party control. For this purpose new committees were set up both at all-Union level – such committees were attached to the Central Committee – and at the levels of republic, oblast and raion. Although the measure was prompted by the need to restore Leninist principles of Party and state control that had been suppressed under Stalin, the newly constituted bodies were hardly consistent with Lenin's vision, since they were not to operate in parallel with Party committees at each level but were to be attached to them. Henceforth raion state and Party control committees were to be headed by the second secretary of each raikom, and at oblast level they were to be subject to the authority of one of the secretaries of the obkom. At the all-Union level the committee was to be entrusted to the leadership of one of the secretaries of the Central Committee: Shelepin was selected for this job.

The November plenum also announced a number of other appointments: Y. V. Andropov became one of the secretaries of the Central Committee, as did V. I. Polyakov, who was simultaneously appointed head of the Central Committee's Agriculture Bureau, A. P. Rudakov, who inherited the leadership of the Industry Bureau, and V. N. Titov, who was put in charge of the Party's organization. L. F. Ilyichev became chairman of the Ideological Commission that was attached to the Central Committee. His incumbency gave him every opportunity to monitor the spread of the new liberalism that was beginning to challenge the old order, which he was determined to oppose. As the battle lines were drawn in the ideological campaigns of the following months, he and Khrushchev found themselves divided by increasing antagonism.

The Twenty-Second Party Congress and its Aftermath

For the world Communist movement the crucial Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union was the Twentieth; for the cultural development of the USSR herself the Twenty-Second Congress was in certain respects more significant. To the surprise of many members of the Central Committee, the principal topic of the Congress was, once again, the Stalin cult.

In the Mausoleum in Red Square the sarcophagus containing Stalin's body still lay next to Lenin's tomb. Hundreds of towns, thousands of streets, squares, factories and collective and state farms still bore Stalin's name. Many social scientists and literati had failed wholeheartedly to pursue 'the line of the Twentieth Congress', and millions of those who had been rehabilitated had been reduced to silence. Between 1956 and 1960 the press had refrained from mentioning important political, intellectual and literary figures who had fallen foul of Stalin, even though they had been posthumously reinstated, yet Stalin's birthday and the anniversary of his death were regularly recorded, and considerable space was devoted to the achievements of the former leader on the occasion of the eightieth anniversary of his birth. At the end of December 1959, for example, *Kommunist* published a long article about Stalin in which the following encomium appeared:

On 21 December eighty years will have passed since the birth of J. V. Stalin, one of the most prominent and active leaders of the Communist Party and of the international Communist movement. J. V. Stalin was an outstanding theoretician and organizer, a staunch defender of Communism, a faithful advocate of Marxism-Leninism and a devoted proponent of the interests of the working people. He carried out the exalted instructions of the Party, holding for more than three decades the post of General Secretary of the Central Committee. He rendered remarkable service to the Party, to the Soviet Fatherland, to the people and to the international Communist and workers' movement.¹

After the Twenty-Second Party Congress decisive changes took place. Stalin's crimes were thereafter referred to not in closed but in open sessions, and Khrushchev was no longer alone in broaching the topic. At the Congress the issue pushed into the background all discussion of the Communist Party's programme. When the Soviet people later bought their newspapers they read not optimistic articles about their bright prospects in the 1980s but assessments of the dark days of a quarter of a century before. And these critical reviews mentioned not just Stalin, Yezhov and Beria but also dozens of their henchmen. Khrushchev's influence was central to this radical reversal of opinion.

The Twenty-Second Congress was a regular rather than an extraordinary congress; a report on the work of the Central Committee had to be presented, and it was impossible to evade references to the June 1957 plenum of the Central Committee and the Molotov-Kaganovich-Malenkov group. However, reliable sources have confirmed that the Presidium of the Central Committee recommended that Khrushchev mention the topic only in passing.

On 17 October he took his place on the platform of the Great Hall of the Kremlin and initiated the proceedings of the Twenty-Second Party Congress, at which about five thousand delegates were present. Among them were eighty delegations from foreign Communist and workers' parties, which had been invited to participate, but no representatives from either Yugoslavia or Albania. In his comprehensive report Khrushchev commented on the international situation and on the successes of the various national liberation and labour movements. He said nothing about the differences between the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and the Chinese Communist Party, but he was constrained, he claimed, to criticize the Yugoslav leadership, whose activities, both theoretical and practical, were permeated by 'revisionist ideas'. The next section of his report was devoted to the Soviet Union's economic and cultural achievements and to criticism of certain aspects of her economic reconstruction. He then turned to the work of the Communist Party itself.

It was at this point that, to the astonishment of many of the Central Committee's members, Khrushchev raised once more, deliberately and provocatively, the question of the need to overcome the Stalin cult and its ramifications. He even named, for the first time, all the members of the so-called 'anti-Party group'. He said:

The Leninist policy formulated by the Twentieth Congress had at first to be implemented in the face of fierce resistance from anti-Party elements, from zealous supporters of the methods and practices of the cult of the individual, from revisionists and dogmatists. The Party's Leninist line was opposed by an anti-Party faction consisting of Molotov, Kaganovich, Malenkov, Voroshilov, Bulganin, Pervukhin and Saburov. Shepilov joined them later.

At the beginning it was Molotov, Kaganovich, Malenkov and Voroshilov who resisted most forcefully the Party's policy, which was to condemn the cult of the individual, to foster inner-Party democracy, to condemn and redress all abuses of power and to expose those who were directly responsible for the devising and execution of repressive measures. This stand of theirs was no accident, for they were personally accountable for much of the wholesale suppression of the views of economists and of Party, government, military and Komsomol personnel, and for other practices of a similar nature, that occurred at the time of the cult of the individual.²

The turn that Khrushchev's report had taken provoked lively discussion in the corridors of the Kremlin. Some of the members of the Central Committee Presidium could not conceal their irritation, but it was impossible now for them to deflect attention from the crimes of Stalin and his associates. When the delegates were invited to take part in a general debate after Khrushchev's second report (on the programme of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union), the discussion deviated considerably from the path that had been charted for it.

The second delegate to speak, N. V. Podgorny, the leader of the Ukrainian delegation, criticized Kaganovich severely both for the action he had taken in the Ukraine and for the way in which he had conducted himself as People's Commissar of Transport. According to Podgorny, Kaganovich had instigated the arrest and torture of many sincere Communists. His description of Kaganovich as a 'degenerate' who should long since have been expelled from the Party won him a round of applause. The next speaker, K. T. Mazurov, the First Secretary of the Central Committee of the Byelorussian Communist Party, gave the Congress a detailed account of Malenkov's and Yezhov's assault on the Party cadres of Byelorussia, as a result of which the strength of the Republic's Party organization had been halved in 1936-7. Mazurov called for Malenkov's expulsion from the Party. Several other delegates spoke up: E. A. Furtseva referred to the crimes perpetrated by Kaganovich and Molotov; D. S. Polyansky testified to Kaganovich's destruction of Party cadres in the Kuban;

and the speeches of Ilyichev, Shvernik, A. N. Shelepin (the chairman of the KGB) and Z. Serdyuk (the deputy chairman of the Party Control Committee) disclosed details about abuses of power between 1937 and 1939 that caused a sensation.

When he summarized the debate in his closing speech Khrushchev devoted more time and attention to the crimes of Stalin and his circle than had been accorded to the topic in his report. He spoke at length about the circumstances of Ordzhonikidze's suicide, about the shooting of A. Svanidze, about the fate of certain leaders of the Red Army and members of the Central Committee and about the extremely shady business of Kirov's murder. With the Congress's full approval, he proposed that a monument be erected in Moscow to preserve 'the memory of our comrades who fell victim to tyranny'.

Before the Congress ended I. Spiridonov from Leningrad, P. Demichev from Moscow, G. Dzhavakhishvili from Georgia and N. Podgorny from the Ukraine all demanded the removal from the Mausoleum of the sarcophagus containing Stalin's body, since, as Demichev put it, 'To leave it there any longer would be an act of blasphemy.' After a speech by D. Lazurkina, who had spent seventeen years in Stalin's camps and prisons, the Twenty-Second Party Congress adopted the following resolution:

The retention in the Mausoleum of the sarcophagus and bier of J. V. Stalin shall be acknowledged to be inappropriate, since the serious violations by Stalin of Lenin's precepts, his abuse of power, his mass reprisals against honourable Soviet people and his other activities during the period of the personality cult render it inadmissible that the bier and body should remain in the Mausoleum of V. I. Lenin.

The resolution was adopted on the morning of 30 October; Stalin's remains were removed from the Mausoleum that night. The event was recorded by Yevtushenko in his poem 'The Heirs of Stalin':

Silent the marble.

Silent the glass scintillates.

Silent stand the sentries

in the breeze like bronzes poured.

And the coffin smoulders slightly.

Through its chinks breath percolates.

As they carry him through the mausoleum doors,

Slowly floats the coffin,

grazing bayonets with its edges.

He was silent too –
menacingly silent indeed.
Then grimly
his embalmed fist clenches,
Through the chinks peers a man
pretending to be dead. . . .
He had conceived a plan.
But to rest was having a nap.
And I turn to our Government
with a request:
to double, treble
the guards over that gravestone slab,
so that Stalin should not rise,
and with Stalin – the past.³

But no guards stood sentry at Stalin's grave. Not far from the Mausoleum a deep pit was dug, and Stalin's coffin was placed in it. No earth was brought to fill the pit; instead several dump-trucks unloaded their cargoes of fresh cement over the coffin. On top was placed a granite plaque, on which was later inscribed simply 'J. V. Stalin'.

The decision of the Twenty-Second Congress to remove Stalin's remains from the Mausoleum prompted the eradication of most other traces of the Stalin cult. New names were given to hundreds of towns and cities, streets and squares, factories and farms. Many monuments to the former leader had been destroyed after the Twentieth Party Congress – the huge bronze statue of Stalin that had been erected on the Volga-Don Canal had been dismantled and melted down at that time – but now all such monuments were removed from their sites. It was only in Georgia that isolated statues and monuments were left standing, that Stalin Streets were to be found here and there, that exhibitions devoted to the life and work of Stalin could still be seen in the museums.

The change in the official attitude towards Stalin that had been authorized by the Twenty-Second Congress was soon reflected in the Soviet press. Newspapers at every level published obituaries of political figures, economists, members of the armed forces and artists who had perished in the 1930s and 1940s, ending generally with the words 'fell victim to unjustified repression during the period of the cult of personality', 'died tragically in the period of the Stalin cult' or 'was slandered and perished'. In the course of 1962 Khrushchev himself returned to the subject in several of his speeches. His most pointed remarks were made in a speech that he gave during a visit to

Bulgaria in May, when he spoke of 'the incompatibility of Marxism-Leninism and crime'. 'We condemn Stalin', he said, 'because he drew his sword and wielded it against his own class, against his own Party.'⁴

Public concern revived the question of responsibility for the repression of the Stalin period. Strident demands were made for a more thorough investigation of the crimes of the past and the punishment of their perpetrators. Khrushchev was opposed to any precipitate moves, however. Matters went no further than the expulsion of Molotov, Kaganovich and Malenkov from the Party, though a number of people who had taken an active part in the implementation of repressive measures were given lighter Party punishments and stripped of some of the decorations that they had been awarded by the state. On 4 April 1962, for example, the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet passed a decree depriving 700 officers of decorations that had been awarded in the spring of 1944 – these were men who had supervised the deportation of the Chechens, Ingushes, Kalmucks, Karachais and other national groups. The political and legal rehabilitation of victims whose cases had been reconsidered after the Twentieth Party Congress was progressing very slowly. Neither the Central Committee nor the Prosecutor-General's office undertook an investigation of the show trials of 1928–31 – the Shakhty case, the trials of the Industrial Party, the Workers' and Peasants' Party, the Union Bureau of the Mensheviks, the League for the Liberation of the Ukraine and others – although after a meeting between Khrushchev and Ilya Ehrenburg one notable participant in the October Revolution, F. F. Raskolnikov, was rehabilitated.

The review of the political trials of 1936–8 was broadly complete. The conclusions of the commissions appointed to conduct the review were unequivocal: all the trials had been blatant and deliberate fabrications, and the sentences passed by the Military Collegium of the Supreme Court should therefore be formally rescinded. Those who had been victimized – who included such men as Bukharin, Rykov, Kamenev, Zinoviev, Pyatakov, Serebryakov, Sokolnikov and many others – should naturally be rehabilitated forthwith. Khrushchev was inclined to concur with these conclusions, but he was subjected to considerable pressure not to do so by members of the Central Committee and a number of prominent leaders of the international Communist movement, such as Maurice Thorez. According to one report, the exchange between Khrushchev and Thorez was quite sharp. 'What sort of Leninists would we be', Khrushchev demanded, 'if we were to suppress the fact that all those trials were fake and allow a lie to

masquerade as the truth?' Thorez did not dispute the nature of the trials, but he requested that the exposure of Stalin's crimes be halted for a while, arguing that any fresh revelations would be damaging to the world Communist movement. Khrushchev acquiesced, and further rehabilitations were postponed indefinitely. Nevertheless, in spite of the premier's vacillations, in general the political and cultural climate of the Soviet Union improved considerably. In the mid-1960s Giuseppe Boffa, a former Moscow correspondent of the Italian newspaper *Unità* and a thoughtful observer of Soviet life, wrote:

The response of the Soviet people to the Twenty-Second Congress was in some respects more profound than their reaction to the Twentieth. In six years much had changed. Soviet public opinion was striving vigorously to find answers not only to the questions posed by the Congress but also to those questions that the Congress had merely touched on and left unresolved or had evaded altogether. Opinions about every conceivable issue were being rapidly modified.

The shortcomings of the Twentieth Congress with respect to more thorough investigation of the problems associated with the Stalin personality cult were being gradually remedied. It was not simply Stalin who stood accused: it was Stalinism too – that is, a certain conception of the country's political life. That was the most important change to take place in 1962. . . . Through a source in which I have the greatest confidence I know that at that time Khrushchev was considering the introduction of two radical measures: the abolition of internal censorship and the official repudiation of the pronouncements on art and literature that were made in Zhdanov's time. . . . A discussion of economic issues began in which another central element of Stalinism, economic voluntarism, came in for criticism. Khrushchev told one of the Western ambassadors, in confidence, that he was in favour of greater freedom of political debate and that, in spite of his colleagues' warning that he should proceed with caution, he had not renounced that aim. Suddenly everything had changed. . . .⁵

Change was certainly in the air, but certain developments alarmed observers both in the Soviet Union and abroad. Khrushchev may have favoured greater freedom when it came to politics, but there was one freedom that he would not tolerate: that formerly extended to the Orthodox Church. After a long period of persecution, the Church had been legalized to some extent by Stalin in the autumn of 1943. The Patriarchate had been reinstated; a number of places of worship had been restored to the Church; seminaries had reopened; and the *Journal*

of the *Moscow Patriarchy* had been published regularly. Although the Church continued to be subject to restriction and oppression of one sort or another, its influence had spread during the post-war years, both in the towns and in the countryside. Even in the capital as many as half of the babies were baptized. Church festivals were celebrated by large congregations, composed of young people as well as old.

It is hard to say what inspired Khrushchev's hostility to the Church or what prompted the measures that were taken to curb its influence. The Church of the Transfiguration in Moscow's Preobrazhensky Square was demolished to make way for a Metro line. Requests that the plans be modified to allow the church to remain standing were ignored. On the day that the building was due to be demolished the faithful locked themselves inside it and held a service – but they were quickly evicted by the militia and bands of volunteer patrols. Churches were destroyed elsewhere as well, some of them worthy of careful preservation as ancient monuments. An appeal that was addressed to Khrushchev by the Moscow intelligentsia was handed to him by Sergei Mikhalkov, at whom Khrushchev snapped: 'You take pity on a dozen churches, but have you thought about the hundreds of thousands of people who have nowhere to live?' This prevarication was as transparent as the whole campaign against the Church was unworthy.

Nevertheless, the wind of change that Boffa identified was blowing through every branch of the arts and the sciences. It was evident at the All-Union Conference of Professors of the Social Sciences held in February 1962, for instance, and at the All-Union Historians' Conference, at which subjects were broached that had hitherto been proscribed. The study of economics was released from its straitjacket; even the more fundamental problems of the economics of socialism were now being openly discussed, laying the theoretical foundation of the reforms of 1965. In 1962 a number of books and articles were published that criticized many of the tenets of Stalinism and described in detail certain crimes of Stalin and his accomplices that had previously been closely guarded secrets. A large number of memoirs appeared. After the Twentieth Party Congress only a handful of the rehabilitated victims of repression had dared to commit their reminiscences to paper, and few of those had ever seen the light of day. Now people felt less inhibited and wrote freely about the dark years under Stalin. Some of the memoirs were published; others circulated in manuscript through the extensive underground network known as *samizdat*. The clandestine circulation of literary works, mostly poems, had been going on since the 1950s, but now the volume of *samizdat*

writing increased markedly and included full-length novels, novellas and short stories. Many made a profound impression on all who read them –Evgenia Ginzburg's *Into the Whirlwind* and V. Shalamov's *Kolyma Tales* were two such works.

Of course, not all works of literature were confined to underground circulation. One of the most seminal cultural events of 1962 was the publication in the journal *Novy Mir* of Solzhenitsyn's *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich*. The journal's editor-in-chief, A. T. Tvardovsky, was unable to gauge whether or not he could risk publishing the novella, although he considered it outstanding. He was well aware that the previous year a novel by V. Grossman, *A Life and a Destiny*, in which the author had explored the theme of Stalin's camps, had been confiscated. Grossman had given the novel to the journal *Znamya*; a few months later every copy of it had been removed both from the editorial offices of *Znamya* and from the flats of the author and some of his friends. On the orders of the KGB colonel who had called at the offices of *Novy Mir*, a copy had also been removed from Tvardovsky's own safe. Consequently, Tvardovsky was in no hurry to show Solzhenitsyn's novella to the censor. The action he took was cautious but persistent.

After gathering enthusiastic comments from several prominent writers, Tvardovsky handed a copy of the novella to Khrushchev himself. Khrushchev's aide, V. A. Lebedev, read the work to the premier in the early autumn. Khrushchev liked it; so did Mikoyan. The question of its publication appeared on the agenda of the Central Committee's Presidium. Every member of the Presidium received a copy of the book in proof as soon as the book had been set on *Izvestiya*'s machines. At the first meeting of the Presidium there was no reaction from the members; they neither condemned nor condoned publication of the work. 'You haven't understood the question,' Khrushchev snapped, and he postponed discussion of the novella until the next meeting.

At the second meeting the Presidium approved the publication of the work. Its appearance in print elicited an enormous response. It was published separately, as a book; it sold out; it was reprinted. In December 1962 *Pravda* published an excerpt from Solzhenitsyn's short story *Incident at Krechetovka Station*, which later appeared in full, together with another short story entitled *Matryona's House*, in the first issue of *Novy Mir* of 1963. Recalling those heady days, Giuseppe Boffa later wrote:

One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich marked the beginning of a new phase in the history of Soviet literature. It was new, but not simply because it testified to the creativity of a great new writer and not merely because of its subject matter, although that was what caused the sensation. . . . It was something greater than a literary event. It was a major event in public life. . . .⁶

Such 'major events' in the cultural life of the country did not earn the unqualified approval of the more conservative members of Government, Party and academic circles. Between them and those who were anxious to encourage the new liberalism ideological battle was waged – in itself, a perfectly natural development. In normal circumstances, however, this dispute could never have ended in victory for the reactionaries. They knew that unless pressure were applied to good effect, they stood no chance of success. And pressure was indeed brought to bear in a number of ways. Yet these conservatives knew too that their efforts to stem the flood of liberal ideas would be vain unless they could rally the support of Khrushchev, whose power and influence at that time were almost limitless. How was the premier to be persuaded to take a different line?

Khrushchev's visit to an exhibition of contemporary art at the Manège was one of several ruses calculated to achieve this goal. There is every reason to believe that this particular intrigue was conceived and organized by Ilyichev, one of the secretaries of the Central Committee, and a close collaborator, D. A. Polikarpov.

The exhibition in question was no great landmark in the cultural life of the capital. It had been staged in celebration of the thirtieth anniversary of the Moscow branch of the Artists' Union, and for a month it had been exciting little interest among the people of the city. The work of several well-known and officially recognized artists was represented; no abstract painters had been invited to participate.

Then, unexpectedly, a group of very active unofficial artists received invitations to exhibit their work at the Manège. Their paintings were displayed on the first floor. On 1 December 1962 they were all requested to stand beside their work so that they could explain it. That was the day on which the Central Committee's Presidium was due to visit the exhibition, accompanied extremely unwillingly by Khrushchev. The premier was quite prepared to visit exhibitions of new construction techniques, agricultural machinery, designs for new buildings for the capital or foreign industrial plant, but he knew nothing about painting or sculpture and had never even visited the Tretyakov Gallery.

Khrushchev walked briskly through the ground-floor exhibition,

glancing cursorily at the works of art. Some he liked; others left him indifferent; a few he disliked. Afterwards he talked to the artists. *Pravda* reported: 'The artists and sculptors warmly thanked Comrade Khrushchev and the leaders of the Party and Government for visiting the exhibition, for the attention they had given to the works of art and for their valuable advice and critical comments.'

Khrushchev was about to leave and had already donned his overcoat. His coat was removed almost by force as his colleagues urged him earnestly to examine the abstract art that was displayed on the first floor. Already very irritated, the premier went upstairs. *Pravda* described what happened next:

That same day the leaders of the Party and the Government viewed the work of some so-called abstractionists. It is impossible to suppress amazement and indignation when one looks at these daubings on canvas, without sense, content or form. These pathological eccentricities are nothing but miserable imitations of the depraved formalist art of the bourgeois West. '“Creative work” of this kind is alien to our people,' said Khrushchev. 'They reject it. This fact should be noted by persons who call themselves artists but create “pictures” that make you wonder whether they were painted by the hand of a man or daubed by the tail of a donkey. These persons must recognize their mistake and begin to work for the people.'

A more colourful and more accurate description of the meeting between Khrushchev and the abstract painters has been provided by the sculptor Ernst Neizvestny:

[Khrushchev] began his inspection in the room in which paintings by Bilyutin and some other friends of mine had been hung. He swore horribly and became extremely angry about them. It was there that he said that 'a donkey could do better with its tail' and remarked of Zheltovsky that he was a good-looking man but drew monsters. And it was there that I had my big clash with Khrushchev, the prelude to our subsequent conversation. It happened like this. Khrushchev asked, 'Who's the most important one here?' Ilyichev replied, 'This one,' pointing at me. I was motioned to come forward and stand in front of Khrushchev. He started shouting at me. . . . I said that I would only talk about my own work and turned away to go into the room where my work was on display, not imagining that Khrushchev would follow me. But follow me he did, and so did the whole of his entourage and the rest of the crowd.

That was when the fun and games began. Khrushchev said that I

devoured the people's money and produced shit. I told him that he knew nothing about art. Our conversation was a lengthy one, but essentially it boiled down to this. I made it clear to him that he had been duped, as he was neither an artist nor a critic and was illiterate when it came to aesthetics. (I don't remember the actual words, but that was the gist of what I said.) He denied this. On what did he base his claim to expertise? I asked. He said: 'When I was a miner, I didn't understand. When I was a junior Party official, I didn't understand. At every level on my way up the ladder, I didn't understand. Today I am premier and leader of the Party: surely I'm able to understand things now, aren't I? Who do you work for?'

I should stress that as I talked to Khrushchev, something in me responded to the dynamism of his personality; in spite of the fear in the air, I found him easy to talk to. . . . The danger, the tension and his directness provoked me into answering him in an equally straightforward manner. Generally, officials talk in a vague, flowery way and resort to jargon; they are usually anxious to avoid making any very definite statement. Khrushchev spoke frankly – ignorantly, but frankly – which meant that I could answer him frankly. And I told him that this confrontation had been staged, that it was a plot designed to undermine not just liberalization, not just the intelligentsia, not just me – but also *him*. It seemed to me that my point had struck home, though he went on denouncing me and my work. And what was most interesting was that when I talked honestly, candidly, openly, when I said what I really thought, I stumped him; if I prevaricated even a little, he sensed that I was lying at once and knew that he had the upper hand.

Here is an example. I said to him: 'Nikita Sergeevich, you are condemning me in your capacity as a Communist, yet there are Communists who support my work – for instance, Picasso, Renato Guttuso' I mentioned the names of several artists who were *engagés* and were respected in the Soviet Union. He screwed up his eyes in a shrewd sort of way and asked, 'And do you personally care whether they are Communists or not?' 'Yes I do,' I lied. I should have been honest. I should have said, 'I don't give a damn about that. What matters to me is that they are great artists.' He seemed to know that perfectly well, for he went on: 'Ah, so you do care about that! Well, then, all is clear – even if you don't care whether I, the world's principal Communist, like your work or not. . . .'

. . . My talk with Khrushchev ended like this. He said, 'You're an interesting man – I enjoy people like you – but inside you there are an angel and a devil. If the devil wins, we'll crush you. If the angel wins, we'll do all we can to help you.' And he gave me his hand. . . .⁸

The new mood was too buoyant to be subdued by such manifestations of official disapproval. A letter defending the 'first-floor' artists was sent to Khrushchev by a group of highly respected artists and men of letters, including Ilya Ehrenburg, Kornei Chukovsky, Konstantin Simonov, Dmitri Shostakovich, Yevgeny Yevtushenko and many others. Khrushchev was a little embarrassed about the incident at the Manège. Although he never retracted his pronouncements on abstract art or 'formalist' music, he did try to make amends.

On 17 December 1962, in the Palace of Receptions in the Lenin Hills, a meeting was arranged between leaders of the Party and the Government and several prominent artists and writers. The atmosphere was fairly relaxed, and the speech that Khrushchev made was quite different from the abusive harangues that Zhdanov had favoured. Solzhenitsyn was among those present – Khrushchev greeted him warmly – as were some of the signatories to the letter that the premier had received, a few of whom were allowed to speak to the gathering. One exchange in particular later became known to the country's intelligentsia – that between Khrushchev and Yevtushenko:

Yevtushenko: I should like to say a few words about abstract art and our artists. . . . We ought to show great patience with this abstract trend in our art and not rush to suppress it, because that could have negative results. I know the artists concerned. I know their creative style, and I want to emphasize that they are keen on realistic as well as abstract painting. I am convinced that certain formalist tendencies in their work will be straightened out in time.

Khrushchev: The grave straightens out the hunchback.⁹

Yevtushenko: Nikita Sergeyevich, we have come a long way since the time when in our country only the grave straightened out hunchbacks. Really, there are other ways. I think that the best way is to show patience and tact and give our artists time to develop their work. I think we should allow different schools of art to coexist, and let our art as a whole progress through the contention between them. Artists, like writers and musicians, are very sensitive to coercion of any kind, and so it is best not to resort to that. Everything will come right in the end.

Khrushchev: I don't believe that you yourself like abstract art.

Yevtushenko: Nikita Sergeyevich, there is abstract art *and* abstract art. What is important is that it should not be charlatany. I accept that a situation may arise when it will be impossible to convey the contemporary spirit of our epoch by means of painting in the old style. I must frankly acknowledge that I don't like our portrait painting, even though it is realistic. I have great respect for the people depicted in these portraits, but the pictures themselves seem to me just commonplace

coloured photographs, which cannot touch the viewer's emotions. I cannot believe that you, Nikita Sergeyevich, can like a tastelessly painted picture showing 'N. S. Khrushchev among workers'. My recent work has been closely connected with Cuba. I like Cuban abstract painting very much. It would be a good idea to organize a Cuban art exhibition here. Cuban abstract art enjoys great popularity among the Cuban people and their leaders. Fidel Castro is keen on it. Cuban abstract art helps the revolution. . . . I am not advocating appeasement. I am advocating restraint and profound study of the theory and practice of contemporary art and, in the long run, a consolidation of the forces of our writers and artists for the good of the people.¹⁰

On 8 March 1963 members of the Government and Party leadership attended another meeting at which cultural issues were discussed. It took place in the Sverdlov Hall of the Kremlin and was much more formal. The cultural workers who had been invited to attend were offered no refreshments, drank no toasts. Ilyichev delivered an address that provoked a wide range of reactions among his audience: some voiced support for his views; others rejected them, directly or indirectly. Then Khrushchev rose to speak.

The premier's speech was somewhat confused and contradictory. He heaped praise on the sculptor E. Vuchetin, whose work had received fulsome official recognition, and denounced the 'sickening concoctions' of Ernst Neizvestny. He criticized harshly Khutsiyev's interesting film *Zastava Ilyicha* (*Ilyich Gate*) but commended the work of Tvardovsky, Solzhenitsyn, Chukhray and Yevtushenko. Then he launched once again into an assessment of Stalin's 'services' to the Party and the world Communist movement and referred to his 'devotion' to Marxism and Communism. In view of the line that the premier had taken at the Twenty-Second Party Congress, Khrushchev's words reflected an astonishing *volte-face*. He argued that at the end of his life Stalin had been a sick man and had suffered from paranoia: his crimes were to be regarded as no more than the product of his illness. Turning abruptly to another topic, Khrushchev condemned the dances that the younger generation appeared to enjoy. Back to the subject of Stalinist repression and its treatment in contemporary literature: this was a dangerous topic, Khrushchev claimed, and the material was difficult to handle. This was clearly a warning that no further works dealing with the period of Stalin's rule would be published – and indeed the proscription was soon formalized.

That was as far as the official campaign against liberalization went, however. Khrushchev did not wish to pursue the ideological coercion

of writers and artists – to the disappointment of certain conservative Party circles – and the atmosphere of the Central Committee plenum in June was more relaxed. Thousands of cultural workers, including many who were not Party members, were invited to the plenum, at which Ilyichev delivered the report. The discussion that followed, which was dominated by ideological rather than economic issues, was marred by acrimony from time to time – as, for instance, when N. G. Yegorychev, the First Secretary of the Moscow gorkom, defended Lysenko against the wholly justified attack of the biologist Zhores Medvedev that had been widely circulated in manuscript¹¹ – but Khrushchev's tone was moderate. He referred mainly to the success of the steps that had been taken towards the construction of a Communist society in the Soviet Union and refrained from personal attacks on Soviet artists. Even Neizvestny was treated less harshly than a few months before. Khrushchev observed:

There is a great deal of talk about the work of Neizvestny, the sculptor. I should like to believe that he is an honest and able man. Our consideration of abstract art must not be confined to his sculpture. Let's wait and see how he fulfils his promise – how his work demonstrates that he is serving the people. In any case, it is we who are to blame for not having noticed in good time certain unhealthy tendencies in our art.¹²

Implicit in this last remark was a criticism of Ilyichev.

However inconsistent his views, Khrushchev's influence over matters cultural was paramount. One incident will serve to illustrate this. In July 1963 an all-Europe conference on the problems of the novel was held in Leningrad. It was attended by writers from all over the continent. When it ended certain of the more prominent guests – Sholokhov, Fedin, Leonov, Surkov, Bazhan, Sartre, Tvardovsky and others – were invited to visit the state dacha at Cape Pitsunda, where Khrushchev was on holiday. Tvardovsky was persuaded to read out loud a draft of his satirical poem 'Tyorkin in the Other World', which had been written long before that but never published. It amused everyone present, including the premier, who said that he saw no reason why the poem should not be published. Khrushchev's son-in-law, Adzhubei, who was also present, was by then editor-in-chief of *Izvestiya*, and he forwarded the poem to Moscow. It appeared in the paper on 18 August, prefaced by a foreword by the editor, and soon afterwards it was published in *Novy Mir*.

The poem, an acerbic attack on bureaucracy, on the grossly inflated

establishments of the *nomenklatura*, on the constant 'reorganizations', had been submitted to the censors before publication. The poet's references to repression under Stalin and to the monstrous cult of personality had been noted – as had the following lines:

Here with fools
We proceed according to plan. . . .
Some you ask to go away,
But they don't want to retire.
These we usually make censors –
At a higher salary.
From that little job
There's no need for them to hurry off anywhere. . . .

Aware of the power behind Tvardovsky, the heads of the censorship department ignored the seditious nature of the rest of the poem and requested merely the deletion of these particularly provocative lines. Tvardovsky refused to make even that concession. In the end the poem was published in its entirety, and not one word of it was lost on any Soviet citizen who read it. The bureaucrats were furious – but they held their peace.

PART SEVEN

The Last Year in Power
1964

Discontent: the First Signs of Opposition

The leaders of the Party and the Government saw in the New Year at a large gathering at the Kremlin. As midnight approached, Khrushchev rose to propose a toast to the departing year. 'It was a good year,' he said. 'Things went well for us. But naturally the people want more – and they shall have more.' It was a brave statement in view of the country's parlous economic state.

In 1963 gross industrial production had risen by 8·1 per cent, one percentage point lower than the rate of increase calculated for the previous year. More important, there were indications that the industry of the Soviet Union was less efficient than it had been. According to statistics provided by economists, the return on every rouble invested in industrial production in 1963 was 15 kopecks less than it had been in 1958; in consequence, the USSR had lost 15,000 million roubles on its investment in industry. In almost every branch of industry except the generation of electricity and metal-working productivity had declined sharply – for the first time in four decades. Although the list of commodities in short supply was extensive, manufacturing industry continued to saturate the market with consumer goods that remained unsold. Warehouses were packed with enough clocks and ready-made clothes to last two years and enough sewing machines to last one, and there were enormous reserves of unsold books and cameras. Yet the amount of money in people's pockets had increased.

During the years of the Seven-Year Plan certain imbalances had emerged. Light industry and the food industry between them employed between 35 and 40 per cent of all Soviet workers, but they benefited from only 8 per cent of all capital investment. Extractive industry was inefficient: although it received 30 per cent of the funds invested in industry and employed nearly 20 per cent of the workers of

the USSR, its output contributed only 7 per cent, in terms of value, of the country's total industrial output.

The record of the Seven-Year Plan was no more creditable when it came to agriculture. In 1963 gross agricultural production had been 10·7 per cent below the 1962 level and somewhat lower even than that of 1958. The livestock statistics were alarming: the number of pigs had fallen from 70 million to 41 million, and over the course of the years the number of cattle had dropped by 1·5 million and that of sheep by 6 million.

The setback in agriculture could not be laid at the door of bad weather alone. The mandatory elimination of fallow had taken its toll, and millions of hectares of arable land were now barren. Siberia was so short of seed that it was dependent on other regions for its supplies. In 1963 ecological disaster struck the virgin lands. During May hurricane-force winds stripped the lands of millions of tonnes of fertile soil, which was deposited in the foothills of the Sayan Mountains. Figures that would indicate precisely how much arable land was lost that year have still not been published, but it is possible to gauge the extent of the damage from the fact that the cultivated area of the USSR, which had increased steadily since 1945, contracted by 6 million hectares in 1964.

Among the people discontent was rife. As early as 1962 it had been apparent that Khrushchev's popularity was declining. During 1963 this trend had become more pronounced. Nearly every section of the population had grounds for complaint. The workers were dissatisfied because food was scarce, many consumer goods were in short supply and prices had risen slowly but inexorably. Pensioners and white-collar workers on fixed salaries were having to face the fact that their real incomes were falling. The peasants were outraged by further official encroachment on their private plots of land and the compulsory purchase of their livestock. The income that collective farmers and workers on state farms derived from the cultivation of publicly owned land attached to the farms was rising more and more slowly. Officers in the armed forces were disturbed by reductions in their pensions and MVD officials by the abolition of supplements to the salaries of the commanders of the militia and the MVD troops. Administrative officials had been unsettled by the frequent 'reconstructions' and 'reorganizations', and full-time Party functionaries were displeased with the introduction of the principle of re-election to which members of Party committees were now subject. (Khrushchev intended to introduce this principle into the Constitution of the Soviet

Union, so that all higher state officials would be obliged to submit to more democratic procedures.) The division of the obkoms into industrial and agricultural sections and the reorganization of the Party's administration at raion level had provoked a generally hostile reaction. In every state organization executives who owed their appointments to the *nomenklatura* were angry about the curtailment of their privileges – in the early 1960s Khrushchev had imposed rigorous restrictions on the number of people who were permitted to make use of state-owned cars, for instance – and the intelligentsia and the young were disaffected as a result of the harsh campaign that had been waged against new movements in the arts and the ideological stringency of recent months.

There is plenty of evidence to suggest that discussions about the desirability of removing Khrushchev from his position as head of the Party and the state took place at the beginning of 1964. These discussions gave rise to rumours, some of which reached the premier. One day he turned to Podgorny and asked: 'So you've been thinking of ousting me?' Podgorny denied this vigorously, and Khrushchev gave no further thought to the matter. If he guessed that there was some covert opposition to his power, he did not regard it as a serious threat. In his time he had managed to undermine the influence of Beria and all his group. He had removed men like Molotov, Malenkov and Kaganovich from the Politburo and Zhukov, Voroshilov, Bulganin, Shepilov, Pervukhin, Saburov and Kirichenko from the leadership. His attitude towards the men who had replaced them was frequently one of undisguised contempt, and he certainly did not regard them as rivals. He was convinced of their loyalty and treated them as dutiful orderlies. His proposals rarely met resistance.

However, Khrushchev was insensitive to signs of a change in the mood even of that broad circle of members of the Central Committee whose backing had ensured his victory at the time of the plenum of June 1957. By the early months of 1964 dissatisfaction with the methods and results of his leadership had infected the majority of obkom secretaries and chairmen of the Sovnarkhozes and State Committees who sat on the Central Committee.

In spite of mounting opposition, official adulation of the premier had increased steadily between 1962 and the spring of 1964, at the instigation of the state propaganda machine. Its effects were counter-productive. Eulogies of 'the great Leninist', 'the great fighter for peace', 'the outstanding Marxist-Leninist theoretician', stirring reminders of the Party's good fortune to be working under the

leadership of Khrushchev – all attempts to elevate the premier to the status of a cult figure – merely contributed to the decline of his popularity. Yet Khrushchev took no steps to check this flood of exaggerated praise, apparently accepting it as no more than his due.

It has long been accepted that the integrity of even the most well-meaning of men is corroded by unlimited power. Khrushchev was no exception. As time went by he became increasingly impatient, irritable, abrupt and discourteous. He was dismissive of those who objected to his measures, and his advisers had learned simply to acquiesce even when they doubted the wisdom of his policies. It had been enough, for example, for the premier to suggest the division of the obkoms in accordance with the requirements of industrial and agricultural production – forthwith several members of the Presidium confirmed that this would be an excellent expedient and remarked on the timeliness and practicality of the proposal. Whereas in the past all large-scale organizational changes had been preceded by all-Union discussions, even if they were largely ritualistic in nature, recent reforms had been implemented without a nod in the direction of national consultation, immediately after brief deliberations with members of the Presidium – which were themselves often merely a formality, since few were willing to argue with Khrushchev.

Nevertheless, at a plenum of the Central Committee that the leader convened in February 1964 Khrushchev's authority was still absolute. By and large the plenum considered routine matters. The Minister of Agriculture, Volovchenko, submitted a report on the advantages that agriculture would gain from the extensive application of chemical fertilizers, the development of irrigation systems and all-round mechanization. These measures, he argued, would demand considerable capital investment and budgetary reallocation. His place on the platform was taken by each of the Agriculture Ministers of the Union Republics in turn – and by Lysenko, who was disturbed by the fact that Volovchenko had said nothing in his report about the various procedures that Lysenko had recommended, which the new Minister evidently regarded with justifiable scepticism. Volovchenko's 'omission' was repaired by Khrushchev himself, who rose to support all Lysenko's initiatives. The concluding words of his speech were: 'We have much to learn from scientists like Lysenko.'

The plenum turned its attention to two other important matters: the decision was taken to grant pensions to collective farmers, who at that time had no right to claim pensions; and Suslov reported on the issues that divided the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and the Chinese

Communist Party, leaving his audience in no doubt about his critical attitude towards the Chinese leaders.

Two months later, on 17 April, Krushchev reached the age of 70. His birthday was marked by celebrations all over the country. At nine o'clock in the morning the entire Presidium of the Central Committee presented itself at his house to offer its congratulations. Every newspaper in the country carried the news that the title of Hero of the Soviet Union had been conferred on Khrushchev for his services to the Party and the state and 'for exceptional services in the fight against Hitlerite aggressors'. Greetings from the Central Committee, the Council of Ministers and the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet were also published. Politizdat, one of the Moscow publishing houses, issued the eighth volume of the premier's speeches and writings, *The Building of Communism in the USSR and the Development of Agriculture*. Official and personal telegrams arrived from all over the world, including one from China signed by Mao Tse-tung, Liu Shao-chi and Chou En-lai, which read:

Although at present there are differences between you and us on a number of questions of principle concerning Marxism-Leninism and there is lack of unity, we are deeply convinced that all this is only temporary. In the event of a major world crisis the two Parties, our two countries and our two peoples will undoubtedly stand together against our common enemy. Let the imperialists and reactionaries tremble before our unity! They are doomed to failure. Long live the great unity and friendship of the peoples of China and the Soviet Union! Long live invincible revolutionary Marxism-Leninism!¹

At a ceremony staged in the Catherine Hall of the Kremlin Khrushchev received the insignia of his new honour. Leading members of the Governments of a number of socialist nations flew into Moscow to offer him their good wishes and to confer on him the highest distinctions that their countries had to offer. At four o'clock a grand reception was held in St George's Hall at the Kremlin: the guests included the entire leadership of the Soviet Union, heads of many socialist states and representatives of the diplomatic missions that were accredited to Moscow. Mikoyan proposed the first toast to Khrushchev.

The next day found the premier back at his desk, absorbed in the routine tasks of government.

Diplomatic Activity and Domestic Concerns

In spite of his years, Khrushchev was tireless. Between January and October 1964 he approached with vigour and enthusiasm a programme of domestic duties and foreign travel that would have made considerable demands on the energy of a much younger man.

At the beginning of January Fidel Castro arrived in the Soviet Union for another visit. He was welcomed by Khrushchev as warmly as he had been the year before, and was borne off to a winter shoot that had been arranged in his honour. Later, after both leaders had put their signatures to an agreement that concerned regular deliveries of Cuban sugar to the USSR – an agreement that was extremely important to Cuba – they left Moscow for Kalinin, Kiev and other towns and cities in the Ukraine. While Khrushchev was in Kiev he met Valéry Giscard d'Estaing, the French Minister of Finance.

In late March Khrushchev travelled to Hungary, which was celebrating the anniversary of the country's liberation. He inspected a number of factories, talked to students and teachers at higher educational institutions in Miskolc and visited the units of the Soviet armed forces that were stationed in Hungary. On his return to Moscow he attended a ceremonial reception in honour of President Ben Bella of Algeria, who accompanied the Soviet premier to the Crimea a day or two later in order to inspect some sanatoria and state farms.

On 6 May Khrushchev boarded the *Armenia* at Yalta. The premier was bound for Alexandria in Egypt, where the ship docked three days later. The occasion of this state visit was the start of work on the first section of the Aswan High Dam, which was being constructed to a Soviet design, with Soviet equipment and with the aid of funds that had been granted to Egypt by the Soviet Union. The Egyptian President, Gamal Abdel Nasser, met the Soviet leader at the port; he had arranged a triumphal welcome for Khrushchev along the entire route

from Alexandria to Cairo. Once in the capital, Khrushchev addressed the National Assembly, visited the National Museum and the Museum of Islamic Art, drove to Gizeh to see the Pyramids and attended a festival of Egyptian youth. A few days after his arrival he and President Nasser travelled south to Aswan, where, in the presence of President Ben Bella and the Iraqi President, Abdel Salem Muhammad Arif, the two leaders jointly pressed the button that detonated explosives attached to a vast structure separating the River Nile from its new channel. The first stage of the Aswan hydro-electric scheme was inaugurated.

When they returned to Cairo Khrushchev and Nasser held detailed discussions about aid and co-operation between the two countries. For his services to Soviet-Egyptian relations the Soviet leader was awarded Egypt's highest honour, the collar of the Order of the Nile. According to diplomatic protocol, in return the Soviet Government was obliged to confer an equivalent honour on Nasser. The issue was a delicate one.

After the visit to the USSR of Haile Selassie, Emperor of Ethiopia, who had paid Khrushchev the compliment of awarding him the most exalted of his own country's honours, the Soviet leader had raised the question of the creation of a special Soviet decoration that could be conferred not only on leaders of socialist countries but also on the heads of other states. Naturally, it would have been odd to confer on the Emperor of Ethiopia either the Order of Lenin or the Order of the Red Banner of Labour. Eventually, the Emperor was awarded the military Order of the Red Banner: he had, after all, sided with the Allies against the Axis powers in the Second World War. The issue of a new honour had remained unresolved since then. Khrushchev consulted the Soviet Ambassador to Egypt, who confirmed that President Nasser should receive the Soviet Union's highest decoration. Immediately a coded telegram was dispatched to Moscow in which Khrushchev requested that Nasser be awarded the title of Hero of the Soviet Union and that the same honour be conferred on the Egyptian Vice-President, Marshal Amer. In the face of opposition from the Presidium of the Central Committee the necessary decree was issued, and the decorations were sent express to Cairo.

The awards were a mistake. In the eyes of the international diplomatic community they were insulting, as both men had supported the Nazis against Britain, one of the Soviet Union's allies; furthermore, in Egypt the Communist Party was obliged to work underground, and many Communists had been imprisoned and cruelly tortured. In

Moscow Khrushchev's misguided generosity was to have serious repercussions.

The Soviet premier returned to the USSR at the end of May. At the beginning of June he visited Leningrad, and while he was there President Tito of Yugoslavia flew in for a brief meeting with him. On 14 June Khrushchev began a three-week tour of Scandinavia, accompanied by members of his family. The visit had been postponed for some years, as relations between the Soviet Union and Sweden, Denmark and Norway scarcely justified a tour of these countries – and certainly not one as lengthy as this. Nevertheless, Khrushchev was interested in what he saw and took particular note of the ways in which the Scandinavians employed chemical fertilizers.

July and August were busy months. Khrushchev and his large retinue returned from Scandinavia on 5 July. Two weeks later the premier left for Poland to attend celebrations to mark the twentieth anniversary of the Polish People's Republic. On 1 August, following predictions of high yields all over the Soviet Union, Khrushchev toured a number of the country's collective and state farms and visited the virgin lands, where farmers were preparing for the harvest. Once again he became involved in heated arguments about the advantages of fallow, one of which resulted in his peremptory dismissal of Barayev, director of the Grain Institute at Shortandy in Kazakhstan, whose views had enraged Khrushchev two years before. On this occasion, however, the authority of the leader was challenged. After he had left, the secretary of the virgin lands kraykom, F. S. Kolomiets, convened a meeting of the kraykom bureau and informed its members of Khrushchev's action. One of the members, the director of a large state farm, defended Barayev and his system of farming. He was supported by the majority of the bureau, which rejected Khrushchev's proposed modifications to the system, declaring that the premier had evidently been misinformed. This was perhaps the only case of its kind, but it was a clear indication of the leader's declining popularity and power.

On 18 August Khrushchev returned to Moscow. During the course of the next week or so he welcomed four important visitors to the Kremlin: R. A. Butler, the British Foreign Secretary; U Thant, Secretary-General of the UN; Nelson Rockefeller, the American banker; and Roy Thompson, the Canadian newspaper proprietor. On the 27th he left for Czechoslovakia, where he was a guest at the celebrations of the twentieth anniversary of the armed uprising in Slovakia. His host was Dubček, First Secretary of the Slovak Communist Party.

Agricultural reform weighed heavily on Khrushchev's mind. In early September, once he was back from Czechoslovakia, he proposed a new scheme that he was convinced would revolutionize stockbreeding and arable farming. The plan was to establish, throughout the country, a series of specialized administrative units that would take charge of particular branches of farming – pig breeding, poultry farming, the cultivation of sugar-beet, maize or cotton, cattle rearing and so on. Unlike the premier's previous projects, this one met with serious opposition both from the Central Committee's presidium and from the obkom secretaries, who regarded it as unnecessary and unwise in view of the fact that most collective and state farms were not geared for specialization. But Khrushchev waved these objections aside. He issued a detailed memorandum in which he justified the decision he had taken and circulated this among the obkoms and the Party's Central Committees in all the Union Republics. He also arranged for the matter to be discussed at a special plenum of the Central Committee in Moscow in November. He could not have guessed then that the plenum would never be convened.

Another plan that would never mature, although the ground was being prepared for it, was a projected visit to the Federal Republic of Germany. Regardless of the objections of Walter Ulbricht, head of the East German state, Khrushchev proposed to make some substantial changes to relations between the Soviet Union and the Federal Republic. For reasons beyond his control, neither the visit nor the changes took place.

Cordial relations with other states were nurtured, however. In the second half of September Khrushchev received the Indian President, Radhakrishnan, the Egyptian premier, Ali Sabri, and President Sukarno of Indonesia. He also found time to welcome a group of Japanese Members of Parliament, the mayor of Dijon, Canon Kir, and ambassadors and journalists from various countries. He spoke at a gathering organized to promote Soviet–Indian friendship and at the World Youth Forum that was held in Moscow. It was not until 2 October, after a second meeting with Sukarno, that Khrushchev flew south, intending to spend the month on holiday at the state dacha at Cape Pitsunda.

Mikoyan was there too. Together they welcomed and held discussions with statesmen from East and West who were visiting the Soviet Union, and together they listened anxiously to radio reports of the three-man space flight that was launched on 12 October. Khrushchev was in constant contact with the mission's control room, and when

news came through of the craft's third successful orbit of the Earth he and Mikoyan spoke to the three cosmonauts by radio telephone and offered their congratulations.

As he relaxed at the Cape, delighted with the success of another Soviet space mission, Khrushchev was quite unaware that far away in Moscow his downfall was being engineered.

Khrushchev's 'Finest Hour'

On 12 October 1964 the Presidium of the Central Committee sat in session at the Kremlin. There was only one item on the agenda: the immediate removal of Khrushchev from all his posts.

Opposition to his authority, discreet and tentative in the early months of the year, had become both strident and overt. His prolonged absences from Moscow had given his political adversaries every opportunity to plan their campaign. There is evidence to suggest that detailed discussion of the Khrushchev question took place among a group of members of the Presidium and the Central Committee in September, while they were on a hunting and fishing holiday in the south, near the Manych lakes, as guests of the First Secretary of the Stavropol kraykom, F. Kulakov. When Khrushchev left Moscow to spend his own holiday on the Black Sea, preparations for his removal went ahead in Moscow. The prime movers were Suslov and Shelepin, but they could not have acted without the full support of Brezhnev, Second Secretary of the Central Committee, and Malinovsky, the Minister of Defence. By the time that the Presidium of the Central Committee met on 12 October the majority of the members both of the Presidium and of the Central Committee had confirmed that they were in favour of the premier's removal.

On the morning of 13 October Khrushchev received at the dacha the French Minister of State, Gaston Palewski. France was preparing for a presidential election, and there was considerable speculation about whether or not Charles de Gaulle would stand for election to a second term of office. Khrushchev put the question to Palewski, who was said to be a close friend of the French President, but he received an evasive reply. Interrupting his guest, Khrushchev said that he was convinced that de Gaulle ought to stand again: 'A real statesman', he said, 'always fights to the end to maintain power.' The Soviet premier was about to invite Palewski to stay to dinner when he was summoned to the telephone. Brezhnev, calling from Moscow, told Khrushchev that the

members of the Central Committee had gathered to discuss the issues raised by his memorandum about the reorganization of agriculture. At first Khrushchev refused to go. 'The matter isn't all that urgent,' he said. 'Besides I'm on holiday, and I need time to relax.' Brezhnev insisted. He told Khrushchev that if he did not return to Moscow, the issues would be discussed and settled in his absence. 'Very well, then,' said the irritated premier. 'Send a plane to pick me up.'

Mikoyan accompanied Khrushchev to Moscow. For the last time General Tsybin piloted the plane in which he and the premier had flown thousands of kilometres. At Moscow airport Khrushchev was met only by the chairman of the KGB, Semichastny. It was quite clear to the leader of the Soviet Union that the topic that was to be debated by the members of the Presidium was not the structure of agricultural administration.

The meeting was attended by twenty-two people. Besides those who were members or prospective members of the Presidium, the gathering included Gromyko, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Malinovsky, the Minister of Defence, and several obkom secretaries. The chair was taken not by Suslov or Brezhnev, as was reported in some foreign newspapers, but by Khrushchev himself.

The discussion was forthright – occasionally even abrasive. No shorthand record of it was kept. Khrushchev adamantly denied all the accusations that were hurled at him and levelled a few charges himself at some of the people who were present. The only person who took his part was Mikoyan, who suggested to the assembled company that Khrushchev's achievements constituted political capital that the Party would be ill-advised to jettison without careful consideration. No one supported him. In spite of the evident futility of further resistance, Khrushchev could not be persuaded to retire 'voluntarily' that evening. Eventually, very late, the meeting broke up. All those present were instructed to reconvene the next morning. During the night Khrushchev telephoned Mikoyan, who had not been able to sleep either. 'If they don't want me, so be it,' said Khrushchev. 'I won't stand in their way any longer.'

The meeting next day was extremely brief – just long enough for Brezhnev to be elected First Secretary of the Central Committee and Kosygin Chairman of the Council of Ministers.

According to Michel Tatu, when Khrushchev had received the French socialist leader, Guy Mollet, almost exactly a year before, Mollet asked him about the rising generation of Soviet leaders who might succeed him. Khrushchev cited three men: first Brezhnev, whom he praised, then

Kosygin, whose competence he commended, and finally Podgorny.¹ Clearly, he had a very accurate idea of the identity of his possible successors.

That afternoon members of the Central Committees of all the Union Republics attended a plenum at the Kremlin. The proceedings were opened by Brezhnev. Mikoyan took the chair. Khrushchev was present, but he remained quite silent throughout the session. The report, delivered by Suslov, lasted just an hour. In it no attempt was made to assess Khrushchev's achievements during his eleven years in power, to weigh triumph against setback, to draw conclusions; it reviewed neither the reasons for the ex-premier's failures nor the value of his successes. It was simply an indictment of Khrushchev's shortcomings that made no adequate distinction between serious errors of judgement and petty misdemeanours. Broadly, Khrushchev stood accused on fifteen counts.

1. His work in his capacity as leader of the Party and the Government had been marred by grave mistakes. He had taken hasty and ill-considered decisions and had encouraged the wanton proliferation of administrative bodies and hierarchical levels. In the preceding two or three years he had concentrated a great deal of power in his own hands and had begun to abuse it. He had taken credit personally for all the country's achievements and successes, had flouted the authority of the Presidium by slighting its members, treating them with contempt and refusing to listen to their views and had lectured them and everyone else unceasingly. Despite frequent appeals from members of the Presidium, he had ignored all critical comment.

Fundamentally, these rebukes were justified. However, Khrushchev had assumed supreme power five or six years earlier, and even at that time he had been no stranger to precipitate decisions. Moreover, the members of the Presidium had raised very few objections to his proposals, and after the June 1957 plenum he had encountered no opposition whatsoever either in the Central Committee or in the Presidium.

2. The Soviet press had taken to publishing more and more about Khrushchev and his virtues. In 1963 the national newspapers had printed 120 photographs of him, and during the first nine months of 1964 140 had appeared in print. By contrast, photographs of Stalin had appeared in the press no more than ten or fifteen times a year. Khrushchev had surrounded himself with relations and journalists, furthermore, whose advice had evidently been more valuable to him than that of members of the Presidium, which had been obliged to

rubber-stamp measures promoted by these people. The former leader had relied on the sycophancy of the press and the broadcasting services to bolster his self-esteem.

This was by no means an accurate account of Khrushchev's relationship with the press or his approach to the formulation of policy. Photographs of Stalin had appeared in the press much more frequently than ten or fifteen times a year, and besides Khrushchev had toured the entire country in the course of his years in office and had made nearly forty trips abroad – naturally, the press had covered his movements with interest. Stalin, on the other hand, had neither left the country nor visited any factories or collective farms after the end of the 1920s.

Suslov also greatly exaggerated the role played by Khrushchev's family – he had cited specifically the ex-premier's son Sergei and his daughter Rada – which had had no influence whatever where affairs of state were concerned. It was certainly true that sycophancy was one of the hallmarks of the press and the broadcasting services – as it was of the Central Committee's ideological commission and agitprop department, whose staff were generally members of the Central Committee rather than outsiders. Even members of the Presidium could be numbered among the sycophants: it would be quite wrong to imagine that its membership, to a man, suffered silently under Khrushchev's contempt without taking refuge in flattery from time to time.

3. The Central Committee had removed the ex-premier's son-in-law, Adzhubei, from his job as editor-in-chief of *Izvestiya* because he was obsequious, incompetent and irresponsible. He had assumed the role of shadow Foreign Minister and had attempted to meddle in diplomatic matters at the highest level, confusing the ambassadors. On one occasion Adzhubei had spoken slightly of Walter Ulbricht when on a visit to West Germany, and it had taken a great deal of tact to soothe the Democratic Republic afterwards.

Indeed, Adzhubei was something of a liability. He was a very capable journalist, and under his editorship *Komsomolskaya Pravda* and later *Izvestiya* had become, by general consent, the liveliest and the most interesting newspapers in the Soviet Union. There was nothing reprehensible about the fact that Khrushchev had occasionally asked him to take political and diplomatic soundings in certain Western countries, since unofficial tentatives can sometimes be more revealing and more productive than official approaches. However, Adzhubei drank a lot and may have been indiscreet on occasions. In spite of his high office –

he had been elected to the Central Committee at the Twenty-Second Party Congress – reliable sources indicate that he frequently mixed politics and pleasure. The two rarely blend happily.

4. The division of the obkoms into two parallel organizations, one industrial and the other agricultural, had caused a great deal of administrative confusion and had contributed to the formation of twin parties – a workers' party and a peasants' party.

The initiative had certainly been an unfortunate one, but Suslov failed to point out that it had been recommended and approved by members of the Central Committee at a plenum not unlike the one that had been convened that very day.

5. Khrushchev had proposed the substitution of political departments in place of existing units of agricultural administration. His memorandum outlining the responsibilities of these new, specialized departments with respect to stockbreeding and the cultivation of crops had been called in by the Presidium in view of its manifest impracticality.

Against this charge there was no defence.

6. The ex-premier had considered himself a specialist in every sphere – agriculture, diplomacy, science, art – and had hectored everyone who crossed his path. In the German Democratic Republic, for example, he had not hesitated to instruct farmers in how to run their farms and had generally behaved as though he were in one of the Republics of the Soviet Union. Furthermore, many of the documents that had been prepared by the Central Committee had carried Khrushchev's name, as though he were to be credited with the wisdom of their conclusions.

The first of these criticisms was just. Khrushchev had never been reticent. On one occasion he had even ventured to lecture the American maize expert Roswell Garst on the right way to sow maize – and Garst had been obliged to disagree with him.

Suslov's second point was an unworthy quibble. It is common practice for communiqués, greetings and letters to heads of state to bear the signature of the premier and for leaders to seek help in composing their speeches, reports and public statements. Suslov himself had often delivered speeches that had been written for him by the staff of the Central Committee. What he did not mention was that Khrushchev had always been very conscientious about his own involvement in the

preparation of documents that were to bear his name. He had never consented merely to reading what had been written for him.

7. Khrushchev had made impossible demands on the members of the Presidium: he had given them only forty-five minutes to respond to his memoranda – in writing. As a result, all consultation had been reduced to a formality, and meetings of the Presidium had become empty gestures.

There was some truth in this. Khrushchev *had* pressed for quick responses to his measures on occasion, but at times of international crisis (the Cuban affair had been a case in point) there had been no scope for leisurely debate. And if meetings of the Presidium had become a formality, the members themselves shared the blame for this. Opposition to Khrushchev would never have been as dangerous as resistance to Stalin's measures. All that might have been put at risk – and then only in certain cases – was high office in the Party.

8. Under Khrushchev the management of industry had become so complicated that the administrative hierarchy – the state committees, the economic councils, the Supreme Economic Council – was now unwieldy and inefficient, as was industry itself, which was less productive than it had been under former systems of management.

Suslov was right – but all of Khrushchev's administrative reforms had had the blessing of the majority of the Central Committee's members. The ex-premier could scarcely be held uniquely responsible for industry's poor performance.

9. Khrushchev had devised and implemented policies that undermined the well-being of the workers. Rises in the price of meat, dairy products and certain manufactured goods had adversely affected living standards, and the supply of meat on the market had steadily diminished as a result of the general application of wholly fallacious theories about animal husbandry that had led to the slaughter of countless heads of cattle.

Again, Suslov's criticism was just: the facts were irrefutable. On the other hand, prices had been rising gradually over the last ten or fifteen years – and wages, salaries and other forms of income had risen too. (It is also worth mentioning that prices did not plummet after the October 1964 plenum.) As for Khrushchev's misguided approach to animal husbandry, all his theories had been aired at meetings of the Presidium

and the Central Committee, at which no opposition to them had been voiced.

10. In interviews the ex-premier had lacked circumspection. He had done nothing to ameliorate the Soviet Union's relations with the People's Republic of China, for example. On one occasion he had remarked to some Japanese Members of Parliament that if the opinion of the Kazakhs in Sinkiang were to be canvassed, and if they declared a preference for Soviet rather than Chinese dominion, then the USSR would be obliged to annex the territory; on another he referred to Mao Tse-tung as 'an old galosh', and Mao had not been gratified by the description when it reached his ears. Khrushchev's treatment of Albania had also been less than sensitive.

The members of the Central Committee had long known that both in private conversation and in public addresses Khrushchev often spoke more freely than was strictly consistent with his position as head of state. His discussions with Western journalists were frequently so candid that an expedient had been adopted: edited and authorized transcriptions of his interviews were published simultaneously in the Western and the Soviet press. Clearly, his comments about the Kazakhs of Sinkiang had slipped through the net. He may well have described Mao as a galosh in some private conversation – but how did the comment reach China? It is common knowledge now that at one or two closed meetings of the Chinese Communist Party Chairman Mao spoke of Khrushchev with equal candour, but at the time his views were not published in Moscow.

11. Even friends of the Soviet Union had not escaped Khrushchev's censure. At a dinner held after one of the Comecon meetings Khrushchev had flung at Zhivkov, the Bulgarian premier, the remark that the Bulgars had always been parasites. The presence of dozens of representatives of socialist states and Communist Parties had inhibited Zhivkov, who had preserved a diplomatic silence. Khrushchev's comment testified to arrogance that was inappropriate in the leader of one of the world's great powers.

'Diplomacy' born of fear had always goaded Khrushchev: Zhivkov should have left the table immediately to demonstrate how offensive he had found the remark. The ex-premier's incivility was inexcusable, however.

12. Khrushchev's attitude towards foreign trading partners had been cavalier. Poland, Romania and Finland had suffered particularly from his arbitrary changes of mind. In Poland a factory had been constructed in which AN-2 aeroplanes were to be produced. The Soviet Union had undertaken to purchase 500 of these from Poland. In the event the order was cancelled because the ex-premier had decided that the aircraft could be built more cheaply in the USSR. The decision amounted to a betrayal of Poland's trust and that of the 15,000 workers who were employed at the factory. Romania's loyalty had been tested by the Soviet Union's requirement that her oil be channelled directly into the Druzhba ('Friendship') pipeline at a time when Romania was delighted to be earning foreign currency through the sale of her oil. From Finland the USSR had ordered prefabricated cottages. Their manufacture had required the construction of a special factory, which lay idle when the order was withdrawn at the insistence of Khrushchev. As a consequence, Finland had refused to invest in new plant when the Soviet Union later wished to place an order for new ships with Finnish shipyards. Furthermore, Khrushchev had resolutely ignored the Soviet Minister of Foreign Trade: during all his years in power he had neither received Patolichev nor even telephoned him.

Khrushchev may well have mismanaged the Soviet Union's trading relations with other countries, socialist and capitalist, from time to time: without detailed knowledge of his motives and priorities, it is impossible to judge. It is certainly strange that he and Patolichev never met, but that was not because the ex-premier dismissed the problems raised by foreign trade. On the contrary, on his trips abroad Khrushchev was always accompanied by one of Patolichev's deputies. Perhaps the Minister of Foreign Trade took pains to avoid troubling his leader with problems that could be resolved at a lower level. Moreover, one of the deputy chairmen of the Council of Ministers of the USSR was Mikoyan, who had overall responsibility for trade, both internal and external. Khrushchev had complete confidence in him and had no desire to interfere in matters that were in his charge.

13. The question of the Timiryazev Agricultural Academy: Khrushchev's decision to move the Academy to a remote spot in the depths of the country when he learned that it employed scientists who disagreed with his agricultural policies ('They are wasting their time tilling the asphalt,' he said, in defence of his

decision) had angered the members of the Presidium. By setting up commissions of various kinds, Khrushchev's colleagues had managed to delay the exile of the Academy, which had been established in Moscow a hundred years before – in short, they had sabotaged his instructions. When Khrushchev discovered one day that the Academy was still in Moscow he issued an order that it was to accept no more students. As the student body had shrunk, more and more teachers had been obliged to leave the Academy.

There was no question about this: Khrushchev was guilty as charged. While the removal of the Ministries of Agriculture of the USSR and the RSFSR to state farms a hundred kilometres and more outside Moscow had obviously been a mistake, his attempt to suppress the Academy had been a clear case of tyranny.

14. The ex-premier had mounted a wholly unjustifiable campaign against fallows and the private plots of collective farmers, who had had to battle against the weeds that grew vigorously on the land that had been confiscated but left uncultivated. He had defended Lysenko's nonsense in the face of vociferous protest from prominent scientists and had even proposed that the Soviet Academy of Sciences create two vacancies for friends of Lysenko. When Sakharov had challenged their candidature, he had been abused by Lysenko, who resented bitterly the rejection of his protégés and took up the matter with Khrushchev. The dissolution of the Academy itself was threatened. When Kosygin had shown some interest in the cultivation of grain in Kazakhstan Khrushchev had regarded this as interference in a sphere over which he himself had a monopoly. In a number of oblasts he had advocated the replacement of collective farms by state farms, although the latter were clearly less profitable.

In this context Suslov's criticisms were entirely valid – not to say restrained. Khrushchev's measures had contradicted the decisions of the Central Committee plenums of 1953 and 1954. Private stockkeeping had suffered a decisive blow; the cultivation of crops on private plots had contracted to such an extent that the prices of potatoes and other vegetables had risen generally; and the deficiencies of the market had scarcely been rectified by public-sector production. And Khrushchev's unconditional support for Lysenko's spurious theories had rightly harmed his reputation.

15. In the promises that he had made to other nations, in his relations with foreign countries generally, Khrushchev had been indiscriminate and profligate. He had conferred on Nasser and Amer honours that were inappropriate; he had committed the Soviet Union to helping Iraq to construct a railway line 600 kilometres long at a time when the USSR herself was able to extend her own railway system by only just that much each year; he had seen fit to order Soviet engineers to build a stadium in Indonesia, where extreme poverty was endemic; he had taken his entire family with him when he toured Scandinavia, prompting the Western press to dub the visit a 'family picnic'.

Certainly, the distinctions conferred on the Egyptian President and his Vice-President were inflated and politically inept. It was true too that Khrushchev was often extravagant when it came to the granting of economic aid to certain nations. (To be fair, it should be recorded that he urged President Sukarno to spend the money on projects that would be of greater value to Indonesia than the construction of a stadium – but a stadium was what Sukarno wanted, perhaps for the purposes of politics rather than sport.) As for the trip to Scandinavia, Khrushchev had taken with him six members of his family, not twelve, as Suslov suggested; but he had been at fault, as the expenses of such visits are borne by the host nations, whose hospitality was abused on that occasion.

Apart from a few nugatory points, that was the substance of the indictment. Suslov ended by posing the question: 'Could we have called Khrushchev to order sooner?' The ex-premier had been warned repeatedly: concerned colleagues had encountered nothing but curt and supercilious rebuffs. It was harder to combat a live cult than a dead one, Suslov claimed. While Stalin had suppressed criticism by physical means, Khrushchev had assaulted the morale of his opponents. His removal would be a sign not of weakness but of strength, and it would serve as a lesson for the future.

Khrushchev may have remained silent throughout the proceedings: many of his former colleagues did not. Suslov's reading of the report had been so frequently interrupted by hostile asides directed at the ex-premier that he concluded: 'To judge by the comments of the members, the plenum clearly approves the Presidium's decision with respect to Khrushchev, and there is no need for a debate.' The resolution that he put to the plenum, 'That N. S. Khrushchev be released

from his duties because of his advanced age and poor state of health', was adopted unanimously. The Central Committee also approved one other resolution: that never again should the offices of First Secretary of the Central Committee and Chairman of the Council of Ministers be held by the same person.

Brezhnev, the new First Secretary, gave a short speech in which he argued that no purpose would be served by further recriminations; he recommended that there should be no detailed discussion of Khrushchev's dismissal at Party meetings, and that at gatherings that included non-Party members comment should be restricted to information carried by official press reports. He urged the Central Committee to resist the temptation to take hasty measures – ill-considered action could only confuse the situation further. Matters would be resolved gradually. The first step should be the reunification of the Party organs in the oblasts, the second the structural reorganization of the country's economy. Efforts should be made to increase the amount of food available on the market; they would be assisted by 1964's successful harvest. The pricing system should be reformed and measures taken to improve standards of living all over the country. In the virgin lands the area under cultivation should be reduced.

The hiatus between Khrushchev's long and active term of office and the new dispensation had been only momentary, his fall from power sealed by nothing more than an orderly resolution. One Western observer was to write later of the plenum: 'The vote there went against Khrushchev, although there was probably some measure of support for him. In a way it was his finest hour: ten years earlier no one would even have imagined that Stalin's successor would be removed by so simple and gentle a process as a vote.'²

Khrushchev himself made the same observation. When he arrived home that evening he threw his briefcase into a corner and said, 'Well, that's it. I'm retired now. Perhaps the most important thing I did was just this – that they were able to get rid of me simply by voting, whereas Stalin would have had them all arrested.'

PART EIGHT

Epilogue

Retirement: Adjustment and Reappraisal

During the first few weeks of his retirement Khrushchev was in a state of shock. In spite of his age, he was still immensely energetic and had a constitution of iron. For the last eleven years he had driven himself even harder than before – his working day had generally stretched to about fifteen hours. He had visited nearly all of the world's principal nations and every part of the Soviet Union. He had involved himself in every aspect of government. Now suddenly, like a rider thrown from a galloping horse, he had been unseated by men who until very recently had been his own loyal and biddable subordinates. He was distraught and made no attempt to hide his feelings. He would sit for hours in his armchair, quite motionless, his eyes often brimming with tears. The headmaster of the Moscow school at which one of his grandsons was a pupil asked the boy, out of curiosity, 'What does Nikita Sergeyevich do nowadays?' The child answered, 'Grandad cries.'

But Khrushchev was too resilient to remain idle for long. Gradually he rallied and began to read newspapers and journals again. He noted the changes that followed his dismissal – the restoration of unified obkoms, the lifting of certain restrictions on the ownership of private plots and, later, the abolition of the Sovnarkhozes and the re-establishment of Ministries responsible for particular branches of production – but he commented on them to no one, not even family and close friends. The Party still commanded his loyalty.

For months he received no visitors apart from his relations. In the Soviet Union the news of his fall had been received with remarkable calm – in certain quarters with considerable relief. In the eyes of the West and of some foreign Communist Parties, however, his popularity was untarnished. Several visiting statesmen and Communist Party leaders expressed their desire to meet him, but the official response was generally that Khrushchev was ill and could not be disturbed. Clearly, this subterfuge could not be exploited indefinitely: some decision had to be taken about the status of the ex-premier. Various proposals were

made, but Khrushchev refused to meet members of the Politburo to discuss them. Early in 1965 he and his family were requested to leave the state dacha in which they were living – a large but poorly designed house that had once been occupied by Molotov's family – and they were assigned instead a rather more modest house near the settlement at Petrovo-Dalneye. For Khrushchev it had one important advantage: attached to it there was a plot of land.

The settlement was surrounded by a high fence. The entrances were guarded by elderly watchmen as a rule; it was usually quite easy to get past them. But a barrier was erected at the entrance to Khrushchev's dacha, and a small detachment of MVD-KGB troops was allocated the task of guarding the ex-premier. They were on duty twenty-four hours a day. Although they followed him whenever he went out for walks, they did not interfere with the family's activities, and their presence was generally quite unobtrusive.

Khrushchev was paid a pension of 400 roubles a month, which was paltry in view of the position he had held until recently. He retained his right to make use of the medical services available at the Kremlin hospital and to draw on special rations. An ancient car was put at his disposal; for some reason, it bore a private number plate. He was also allotted a flat in Moscow, not far from the Arbat, but he disliked it and rarely stayed there, although he did travel to Moscow from time to time.

Business took him to the capital; so, eventually, did pleasure, after the isolation of the first two years of his retirement. He and his wife would occasionally stroll through the city, and they began to go to concerts and to the theatre. Khrushchev particularly enjoyed a performance of Shatrov's play *Bolsheviks* at the Sovremennik Theatre and asked to speak to the playwright and the theatre's principal director, Yefremov. The conversation took place in Yefremov's office. Khrushchev made only one critical comment. The meeting of the Council of People's Commissars that constituted one scene of the play was inaccurate: certain key figures, such as Kamenev and Bukharin, were missing. 'We wanted to rehabilitate them,' said Khrushchev, 'but Thorez prevented it.'

Now that he had the time, the ex-premier took to reading a great deal. He had accumulated a large library; in the past he had been able to obtain copies of every book published in the Soviet Union. One of the works that he read for the first time was Solzhenitsyn's *The First Circle*, of which he had a manuscript copy. He did not like it and said that he would never have allowed it to be published. Although he had

grown more tolerant, he drew the line at any form of political or cultural pluralism. Nevertheless, he did not regret the part he had played in the publication of *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich*. 'Perhaps I'm strange,' he mused one day. 'Perhaps most of us are strange. But there was nothing strange about Tvardovsky. And he told me more than once that the story was a great work of literature and Solzhenitsyn a very great writer.' Khrushchev spoke often of Tvardovsky and always with great respect. He looked through every issue of *Novy Mir* and read the novels and novellas of Abramov, Tendryakov, Aytmatov and Mozhayev that appeared in the journal. He liked Tvardovsky's poetry, which he found quite accessible; Pasternak's poems, on the other hand, he could neither understand nor accept, although he greatly regretted the savage campaign that had been conducted against the writer in 1959 and 1960. He found the dozens of memoirs that were now being published particularly absorbing. Nearly everyone who had held high office in the Government and the Soviet Army – and many of those who were still incumbents – had written accounts of their experiences. Some Khrushchev praised; others he criticized. He was distressed, for example, by the memoirs of Marshal Zhukov, which were published in 1969. Although the two men had met frequently, both before and after the war, Zhukov made no reference to their meetings on the Stalingrad front or at the Kursk bulge or to Khrushchev's part in the liberation of Kiev. The ex-premier was mentioned twice only: Zhukov recorded that he had once 'considered it his duty to present himself to the Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Ukraine', whose attitude he had found 'benevolent', and that he had called on Khrushchev just after the liberation of Kiev, 'knowing that one could always be sure of a hospitable welcome'.¹ Other memoirs were just as discreet, although their authors did not hesitate to write about their meetings and talks with Stalin.

Khrushchev became more and more convinced that he should commit his own reminiscences to paper for the benefit of posterity. He hated writing, however – he was used to dictating. Eventually he requested the services of a shorthand-typist. The Central Committee refused to grant this concession. But the matter did not rest there: Khrushchev began to dictate his memoirs into a tape-recorder. The material was no more than a rough draft, just incoherent notes and half-formed thoughts. His plan was that these should later be typed and edited. It was an ambitious undertaking, and it kept him occupied for hours.

To the surprise of his family, he also started listening to foreign broadcasts in Russian, to the Voice of America, the BBC's World Service and Deutsche Welle. He found them very informative about some of the events that were taking place in the Soviet Union, which he enjoyed discussing with his family. He was enraged by efforts to rehabilitate Stalin in the late 1960s and disapproved of the trials of Sinyavsky and Daniel. He sympathized with the dissidents, whose emergence was initially in part a reaction to the mooted reinstatement of Stalin. He spoke warmly of Sakharov and regretted that the Lysenko issue had driven a wedge between them in 1964. (He took the news of Lysenko's exposure very calmly and made no attempt to defend his absurd theories.) The flight of Stalin's daughter, Svetlana Alliluyeva, to the West hurt Khrushchev deeply. He had known her for a long time, and it had meant a great deal to him that, unlike Stalin's son Vasily, she had publicly supported the decisions of the Twentieth and Twenty-Second Party Congresses. 'She can't have fled from the USSR,' he said. 'You've no idea how devoted she was to Communism. This must be a lie.' But a Voice of America broadcast confirmed the news, and for a long time afterwards he could not bear to hear her name mentioned.

He made discoveries about international crises as well. The invasion of Czechoslovakia by Warsaw Pact forces in August 1968 horrified him. 'There must have been something else they could have done,' he said. 'They've made a terrible mistake.' He argued that things had been quite different in Hungary in 1956: Hungary had been an enemy of the Soviet Union during the war, and Soviet troops had been stationed there. 'Besides,' he added, 'in Hungary counter-revolutionaries were starting to get the upper hand, and they had begun to kill Communists. In Czechoslovakia the Communists had a firm grip on power.' Khrushchev often praised János Kádár, the First Secretary of the Communist Party in Hungary, whose nomination he had supported in 1956 and who continued to send Khrushchev greetings on Soviet anniversaries. The ex-premier was extremely uneasy about developments in China. He followed the ups and downs of the Cultural Revolution with concern and was alarmed by the many armed clashes on the Sino-Soviet border. Although he did not trust the Chinese leaders and spoke of them with some venom, he approved of the first steps towards détente that were taken in 1969–70.

Khrushchev's life was not entirely sedentary, however. He was seized by enthusiasm for photography and became quite skilled as a photographer, although his subject matter was necessarily restricted to his immediate surroundings – to the fields, trees, flowers and birds

of Petrovo-Dalneye. And he remained devoted to his garden and orchard. From early spring to late autumn each year he spent most of his time looking after his little plot of land. He wrote off for seeds of quantities of different plants, including some that were native to the south, and naturally sowed and tended different varieties of maize. His tomatoes were his pride and joy: in 1967 he nurtured about two hundred plants of a particular variety, which produced fruit weighing as much as 1 kilogram each. He used to get up at four in the morning to water them. Sadly, most of them were blighted by an unexpectedly early frost, and the old man took this disaster very hard.

He continued to experiment. The next enthusiasm was hydroponics. He managed to acquire some suitable pipes and, despite his 'advanced age' and 'poor state of health', bent them into appropriate shapes and drilled holes in them. He filled them with all the recommended ingredients and planted them with seedlings. His success was moderate but encouraging enough to convince him that the future of agriculture lay with hydroponics – until he discovered through greater experience that the method was anything but economic. The following spring there were no more pipes in the garden: hydroponics had been consigned to the day after tomorrow.

Khrushchev's interest in agriculture extended beyond the fruit and vegetables that he could grow in his own garden. Not far away from the dacha there were some fields that belonged to local state and collective farms. On one occasion, as he was strolling past, he noticed a field that looked barren and neglected. He asked the farmers who were working nearby to call their brigade leader, who appeared promptly, accompanied by the chairman of the farm. Khrushchev rebuked them both quite sharply for managing their farm so poorly, which so astonished the two men at first that they had nothing to say in reply. Eventually, however, the chairman – stung, apparently, not so much by the ex-premier's strictures as by their pertinence – retorted that Khrushchev was no longer the head of state and should mind his own business. Khrushchev was upset by this unpleasant incident and dwelt on it for a long time afterwards, particularly as his relations with neighbours and with local farmers were generally good. He often met people who worked on the farms in the countryside nearby and would spend hours talking to them beside the river, just as he enjoyed chatting to his guards and to the inmates of a neighbouring rest home, who were not at all reticent about asking him challenging questions about events of the past. One day some farm workers from another oblast visited a village not far from Khrushchev's dacha. When they discovered

that the ex-premier lived close by they walked over to the tall fence that surrounded his home and hauled themselves up so that they could look over into his garden, where he was working. 'Are they treating you badly here, Nikita?' asked one of the men. Khrushchev straightened up and smiled. 'No, no,' he replied.

But he was still subject to wary official scrutiny. In 1967 he had his first brush with the Central Committee since his retirement. A short film about how Khrushchev was spending his time as a pensioner had been shown on French television, evidently supplied by a reporter who had been admitted to the dacha by one of the ex-premier's relations. The film displeased the Central Committee, which ordered the replacement of Khrushchev's guards – who were doubtless reprimanded for dereliction of duty – and instructed Khrushchev himself to report to Kirillenko, who owed his own rapid promotion, ultimately to the Presidium of the Central Committee, to the ex-premier. At the interview Kirillenko snapped: 'You are still living too well.' Khrushchev's reply was measured. 'All right,' he said, 'you can take away my dacha and my pension. I shall be able to wander through this country with my hand outstretched, and people will give me whatever I need. If *you* were destitute, no one would give you anything.'

His defiance was no longer born of arrogance. With the passing of the years Khrushchev had become more critical of himself and of the decisions he had taken when in power. He had never considered attempting to reclaim his former status – indeed, as time went by he regretted less and less the power he had surrendered, though he did regret certain actions and was prepared to acknowledge a number of mistakes. He was full of remorse, for example, about his shelving of the issue of the rehabilitation of Party members: he admitted that he should have annulled the sentences passed at the trials of 1936–8 instead of filing away in the archives the detailed conclusions of the Central Committee's commissions. He also bitterly regretted the noisy ideological campaigns of 1962–3, for which he was inclined to blame Ilyichev. 'He needed to get into the Politburo,' said Khrushchev. On the other hand, he always resented the charge that he was anti-Semitic and claimed that it was the attitude of others, trained under Stalin, that had harmed his reputation – and, certainly, during his years in power he did resolutely attempt to redress the most evil of Stalin's crimes against the Jews. In connection with some issues that drew unfavourable comment he stood firm: a Communist had to act in a certain way, he said, and he would die a Communist.

His intransigence may have cost him his power in the end, but there

were some who were not alienated by it. His visitors at the dacha included artists (some of whom he had vilified at the Manège) and writers, and the Moscow intelligentsia maintained sporadic contact with him. He was greatly touched when Ernst Neizvestny sent him, as a gift, Dostoyevsky's *Crime and Punishment*, with the original illustrations, and he enjoyed the visits of Yevtushenko and Shatrov. One incident pleased him particularly. It occurred on his seventy-fifth birthday, in April 1969, which was noted in most leading foreign newspapers. That day he received telegrams from prominent statesmen all over the world and birthday greetings from both President de Gaulle and Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II. As usual, a cordial telegram arrived from Hungary, signed by János Kádár. What Khrushchev could not have anticipated was a telephone call from Len Karpinsky, the son of V. Karpinsky, who had been a friend of Lenin and a prominent member of the Party. Len Karpinsky happened to be in the offices of *Izvestiya*, talking to some colleagues, who began to reminisce about the days when Khrushchev was in power. At Karpinsky's suggestion, they rang the ex-premier to congratulate him. Karpinsky introduced himself and then went on:

We were educated by the Twentieth and Twenty-Second Party Congresses, and we shall always appreciate the role you played in exposing Stalin and in rehabilitating his victims. I am sure that it will be *those* events that will, in the end, determine the significance of our era and of your part in it. And all of us gathered here wish you good health and many happy returns on your birthday.

A Proper Epitaph

Just over a year later, in the summer of 1970, Khrushchev had his first heart attack. He spent several weeks in hospital and never fully recovered his former robust good health. His convalescence was not assisted by the unexpected publication of his memoirs in the West in the autumn of that year.

It is not clear how Western publishers acquired Khrushchev's rough tape-recorded notes, from which the first volume of his memoirs was constructed. What is certain is that the appearance of the book caused a sensation in the West, surprised and alarmed the Politburo and astonished Khrushchev himself. The Soviet press denounced the book as a forgery – Khrushchev's name was mentioned in the newspapers for the first time since 1964 – and the ex-premier was summoned before Arvid Pelshe, the chairman of the Party Control Commission and a member of the Politburo. Their discussion of the matter was somewhat barbed and culminated in Khrushchev's signing a short statement to the effect that he had not given his memoirs to any publisher, in the East or in the West, and condemned their unauthorized publication. The statement was published in the press the following day.

Eyewitnesses relate that Khrushchev left Pelshe's office clutching his chest. His strength was failing. As the warm days of the summer of 1971 came and went, he worked in his garden less and less; instead he used to sit in his armchair for several hours at a time. At the beginning of September he paid a visit to his daughter Rada and son-in-law Adzhubei, whose dacha was near the town of Zvezdny. Accompanied by their gardener (and by his guards), he went for a stroll in the woods nearby to collect mushrooms, but he soon tired. He asked the gardener to fetch a folding chair from the dacha so that he could rest there in the woods. He remained seated for a long time, quiet and still, until he had recovered enough to make his way back to the dacha and from there to Petrovo-Dalneye. On his return home his doctor insisted that he

should be taken straight to hospital. In the afternoon of the next day, 11 September 1971, Nikita Sergeyevich Khrushchev died.

On one occasion when he was still in power reports that Khrushchev had died appeared in several foreign newspapers. He himself took the news in good part and responded to it by holding a brief press conference the following day. 'When I die,' he told the assembled journalists, 'I shall inform all foreign correspondents myself.' In the event his family was permitted to tell no one of his death, not even close friends, and the foreign correspondents heard the news from Victor Louis, a journalist who was reputed to be privy to confidential affairs of state. The Soviet people were not told that he had died until the early hours of the morning of 13 September, when a short note was published in *Pravda* recording the death, in the seventy-eighth year of his life, of 'the former First Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, personal pensioner N. S. Khrushchev'. No obituaries appeared; no information was given about the time and place of the funeral.

The news had spread, however. Since early in the morning of 13 September people had been gathering at the gates of the Novo-Dyevichy cemetery – elderly people on the whole, but some quite young people had made the journey as well. I was among them and was interested to see a number of old Bolsheviks whom I knew, men who had returned to Moscow after the Twentieth Congress. The funeral was due to start at noon, but long before even our arrival detachments of the militia had taken up positions on all the approaches to the cemetery, and the convent and cemetery were surrounded by special security units. No one was allowed through the cordon, and on the cemetery gates there hung a large notice: 'Cleaning day'. A trolleybus line ran past the cemetery. That day no passengers were set down at the stop just opposite the entrance.

At eleven o'clock the foreign correspondents began to approach the guards, who let them through the gates after checking their identity papers. Half an hour later a command rang out and the militia briskly cleared part of the roadway. Motorcyclists appeared, not from the direction of Pogodin Street or Pirogov Street but from further down, from the river embankment. There are never many people down by the river. The route that the funeral cortège was to take had been chosen with care. After the motorcyclists came a hearse and a lorry carrying wreaths, both travelling quite fast. Behind them followed twenty-five or thirty cars, one after another. There was little of the sober and stately funeral procession about all the activity.

There are many accounts of Khrushchev's funeral. Robert Kaiser, the *Washington Post's* correspondent in Moscow, wrote:

The KGB ensured that no ordinary citizens got near Novo-Dyevichy on that grey and drizzly autumn day. Only plainclothesmen, foreign journalists, members of the Khrushchev family and a few close friends were admitted. No member of the country's new leadership attended, but the Central Committee and the Council of Ministers jointly sent a large wreath. So did Anastas Mikoyan, then living in honourable retirement. Khrushchev's successors obviously wanted him to pass finally from this world as inconspicuously as possible.

Nevertheless, Khrushchev's son Sergei . . . brought some drama to the ceremony. Shortly after the open coffin was placed on a platform beside the grave, Sergei stepped up on the pile of freshly dug earth beside the empty hole and addressed the crowd. 'We simply want to say a few words about the man whom we are burying now and for whom we are crying,' he began. He paused to regain composure, and his lips quivered. . . . 'I won't talk about the great statesman. . . . I will not evaluate the contributions which Nikita Sergeyevich, my father, made. I don't have the right to do that. History will do that.

'The only thing I can say is that he left no one indifferent. There are people who love him and people who hate him, but no one can pass him by without turning to look. . . . A man has gone from us who had the right to be called a man. Unfortunately there are very few such real people. . . .'

. . . Guests were given the opportunity to walk past the coffin as a small band played a mournful funeral march. Khrushchev's body lay on red satin, dressed in a white shirt, black tie and black suit. His lips were pursed in an unnatural expression and the face was waxen, but the famous profile was unmistakable. Because of the rain someone held an umbrella over the head of the corpse.

After all who wanted to had walked past, Mrs Khrushchev tearfully put her hand on the forehead of her dead husband. Others in the family did the same. Workmen then put the top of the coffin in place and nailed it down. A man stood at the head of the grave holding a red pillow on which all Khrushchev's twenty-seven state medals, including the very highest awards, were pinned. The coffin was lowered into the hole.'

By this time the historian A. M. Nekrich had arrived at the cemetery, accompanied by a group of old Bolsheviks. In his memoirs he recalls the scene:

Four sturdy gravediggers hastily set about filling in the grave. . . . I watched. On every side cameras were clicking and the correspondents'

film cameras were whirring. . . . Wreaths were laid on the grave, and the mound was heaped with flowers. The gravediggers were positioning a white marble plaque bearing the laconic inscription 'Khrushchev, Nikita Sergeyevich, 1894–1971'. Above this there was a portrait of the dead man, in a glass-fronted frame. . . .

Khrushchev's closest relations crowded around the grave. I just caught sight of the sad, tear-stained face of Nina Petrovna; Rada Nikitichna, her head bowed; a dignified young woman with a beautiful face, who was being supported by an Air Force colonel; the stout figure of Adzhubei – how puffy his face looked, almost unmoved. . . .

. . . We were surrounded by members of the state security service, all in plain clothes. From their bearing and the cut of their suits I guessed that some were quite high-ranking. But why were there so many of them? Why so many militiamen and MVD soldiers hiding under the tarpaulins of military trucks? Why 'Cleaning day'? Why the Novo-Dyevichy cemetery and not the Kremlin wall? What an irony of fate: Nikita Khrushchev will rest among artists, poets, academicians – in short, among members of the intelligentsia, intellectuals to whom he was often unjust but who are alone in remembering him kindly today – while *he*, that other one, will bear company, even in death, with his comrades-in-arms beside the Kremlin wall. . . .²

One more reminiscence deserves to be quoted here – that of Ernst Neizvestny, who wrote:

After Khrushchev's funeral two men came to see me. One was Khrushchev's son Sergei, whom I had not met before, and the other was Mikoyan's son, another Sergei, who was a friend of mine and had stood by me in the darkest days. They hesitated, uncertain about how best to broach the topic that they wanted to discuss. I said, 'I know why you're here. Let's hear what you've got to say.'

'You've guessed that we would like you to carve the tombstone,' they said.

'All right' I replied. 'I agree. But on one condition: I must be able to do whatever I think appropriate.'

'Of course,' Sergei Khrushchev conceded.

'It seems to me,' I went on, 'that no artist could be more malicious than a politician, and that is why I'm accepting the commission. That's my rationale – but what's yours? Why do you think I should undertake the job?'

Sergei Khrushchev replied, simply: 'It's in my father's will.'

. . . The monument was unveiled in the rain on one of the anniversaries of Khrushchev's death. The whole Khrushchev family was present, together with foreign correspondents and guards. No one else was

allowed into the cemetery without a special pass. . . . When all the members of the family had left. . . . Sergei Khrushchev and I went back to Sergei's flat with five of our friends. He took out a bottle of brandy that President de Gaulle had given to Khrushchev – the brandy was a hundred years old – and said to us, 'My father could never bring himself to drink this expensive brandy. Today we'll drink it.' And we polished the bottle off.³

On his seventieth birthday, after he had been awarded the title of Hero of the Soviet Union and had received the insignia, Khrushchev gave a short speech in which he said, 'A kind of death sometimes visits politicians before they actually die.'⁴ His words were prophetic. His popularity had waned in the last years of his power, and after his retirement there was no section of the population that would have sought his restoration. He simply ceased to exist as a political entity. Since his death, however, interest in him and his achievements has revived. Historians and politicians have appreciated more fully the importance of that radical change in the policy of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, of the USSR herself and of the entire Communist movement that is linked with his name. For all his faults, Khrushchev was the only man in Stalin's circle who was capable of initiating and implementing that change. Under his influence nearly 20 million people were rehabilitated in the Soviet Union – many of them posthumously, alas. The fact alone outweighs all his shortcomings in the scales of history. As Mark Frankland rightly observes:

The proper epitaph for [Khrushchev's] rule remains more impressive than that deserved by many politicians: that he left his country a better place than he found it, both in the eyes of the majority of his own people and of the world.⁵

In Moscow there are four graves that are visited by the people of the Soviet Union more frequently than any others. Each day wreaths and bouquets are found at Lenin's tomb, but that has become an official ritual. The same could be said of the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier. Tributes appear almost daily on Stalin's grave beside the Kremlin wall; generally these come from Georgia. And in the Novo-Dyevichy cemetery, on nearly every day of the year, fresh bunches of flowers are laid beside the imposing tombstone of Nikita Sergeevich Khrushchev.

Notes and References

1 'A Working Man's Cambridge'

1 *Pravda*, 19 May 1962.

2 *ibid.*, 13 December 1962.

3 *ibid.*, 22 September 1959.

4 *ibid.*, 22 May 1959.

5 Yulia lived and worked in Kiev. She died at the beginning of July 1981.

6 *Pravda*, 13 June 1960.

7 *ibid.*, 22 September 1959.

2 *The Foothills of Power: the Donbas and the Capital*

1 *Rasskaz o pochetnom shakhtere (The Story of an Honorary Miner)*, Stalino (Donetsk), 1961, p. 56.

2 *Izvestiya*, 26 April 1963.

3 Rada and Sergei live in Moscow, as does their mother. Yelena died soon after her father.

4 Testimony of A. V. Snegov, an old Bolshevik living in Moscow as a personal pensioner.

5 N. S. Khrushchev, *Vospominaniya: Izbrannye otryuki (Memoirs: Selected Extracts)*, New York, Chalidze Press, 1979, p. 207.

6 *Rabochaya Moskva*, 9 March 1935. It is significant that Kaganovich is mentioned here as *tovarishch* ('comrade'), whereas Khrushchev's name is prefaced only by *tov.*, an indication that while he had become one of the leaders of the Moscow Bolsheviks, he was not yet a 'chief' (*vozhd*).

7 *Khrushchev Remembers*, ed. Edward Crankshaw, London, André Deutsch, 1971, p. 49. (Translator's note: the original text lists the tools as 'calipers, a litre measure, a metre ruler, a centre-punch, a scribe and various squares' – see *Khrushchev Remembers: The Last Testament*, ed. Strobe Talbott, London, André Deutsch, 1974, p. 549.)

8 Oskar Maria Graf, *Reise in die Sowjetunion*, Darmstadt, Luchterhand, 1974, p. 341.

- 9 N. S. Khrushchev, *Vospominaniya: Kniga vtoraya* (Memoirs: Book Two) New York, Chalidze Press, 1981, pp. 7–8.
- 10 *Rabochaya Moskva*, 17 March 1937.
- 11 *ibid.*, 8 June 1937.
- 12 Khrushchev, *Vospominaniya: Izbrannye otryuki*, p. 193.
- 13 *Khrushchev Remembers*, p. 83.
14. *ibid.*, pp. 45–6.

3 *The Ukraine under New Leadership*

- 1 *Sovetskaya Ukraina*, 16 March 1939.
- 2 *Pravda*, 7 November 1940.
- 3 *Ocherki istorii KPU* (Studies in the History of the Communist Party of the Ukraine), Kiev, 1964, p. 499.

4 *The Patriotic War*

- 1 *Pravda*, 7 August 1961.
- 2 N. S. Khrushchev, *Vospominaniya: Izbrannye otryuki* (Memoirs: Selected Extracts), New York, Chalidze Press, 1979, pp. 58–9.
- 3 G. K. Zhukov, *Vospominaniya i razmyshleniya* (Memoirs and Reflections), Moscow, 1969, p. 311.
- 4 *Sovetskaya Ukraina*, 19 January 1942.
- 5 *Voroshilovgradskaya Pravda*, 10 November 1943.

5 *Reconstruction: Successes and Setbacks*

- 1 *Khrushchev Remembers*, ed. Edward Crankshaw, London, André Deutsch, 1974, p. xvi.
- 2 *Pravda Ukrainy*, 2 July 1947.
- 3 XXII-y s'ezd KPSS: *Stenografichesky otchet* (Stenographic Report of the 22nd Congress of the CPSU), Moscow, 1961, vol. 1, pp. 280–1.

6 *Return to Moscow*

- 1 N. S. Khrushchev, *Vospominaniya: Izbrannye otryuki* (Memoirs: Selected Extracts), New York, Chalidze Press, 1979, pp. 131–2.

7 *The Succession: Contention and Conspiracy*

- 1 This law, promulgated on the day that Kirov was murdered, concerned the handling of cases associated with terrorism. In the light of the fact that the accused had no right to be represented by counsel and no recourse to appeal, the measure was severely defective from a juridical standpoint, and it was later repealed.
- 2 N. S. Khrushchev, *Vospominaniya: Izbrannyye otryuki*, (*Memoirs: Selected Extracts*), New York, Chaldize Press, 1979, pp. 156–7. *Cheka* was an abbreviation of the Russian for ‘extraordinary commission’ and was the name given to the Soviet political police between 1917 and 1922. The word ‘Chekists’ is still used to describe members of Soviet security organs.

9 *Khrushchev's Denunciation of Stalin*

- 1 XX-y s'ezd KPSS: *Stenografichesky otchet* (*Stenographic Report of the 20th Congress of the CPSU*), Moscow, 1956, vol. 1, pp. 302–28.
- 2 *ibid.*, p. 498.
- 3 *Politichesky dnevnik, 1964–1970* (*Political Diary, 1964–1970*), compiled by R. Medvedev and Zh. Medvedev, Amsterdam, Herzen Foundation, 1972, vol. 1, pp. 215–17.
- 4 Candidate of Sciences is a higher academic degree.
- 5 Published in English under the title *Son-in-Law*.
- 6 Y. Yevtushenko, *A Precocious Autobiography*, London, Collins/Harvill, 1963, pp. 100–1.
- 7 No. 12 (1957).
- 8 L. Tchoukovskaia (Chukovskaya), *Entretiens avec Anna Akhmatova*, Paris, Albin Michel, 1980, p. 510.
- 9 Among these were: *Yunost* (Youth), *Neva* (*The Neva*), *Molodaya Gvardiya* (*The Young Guard*), *Inostrannaya Literatura* (*Foreign Literature*), *Voprosy Literatury* (*Problems of Literature*), *Tvorchestvo* (*Creative Work*), *Muzikalnaya Zhizn* (*Musical Life*), *Sovetsky Ekran* (*The Soviet Screen*), *Nauka i Religiya* (*Science and Religion*), *Mezhdunarodnaya Zhizn* (*International Life*), *Aziya i Afrika segodnya* (*Asia and Africa Today*), *Istoriya SSSR* (*History of the USSR*), *Novaya i Noveishaya Istoriya* (*Modern and Contemporary History*), *Voyenno-Istorichesky Zhurnal* (*Journal of Military History*), *Problemy mira i sotsializma* (*Problems of Peace and Socialism*).

10 *An Anxious Autumn: Poland, Hungary and Suez*

- 1 *Khrushchev Remembers*, ed. Edward Crankshaw, London, André Deutsch, 1971, pp. 420–1.

11 *The June Plenum: the First Palace Revolution*

- 1 In 1975 the production of meat in the Soviet Union reached 15 million tonnes, or 59.5 kilograms per head of population. Since then it has not increased. In 1979 the Soviet Union produced 15.5 million tonnes, or 57 kilograms per head of population. The economists whom Khrushchev derided for their pessimism were actually, as it turned out, great optimists. In the United States in 1979 meat production per head of population was 116 kilograms.
- 2 XXII-y s'ezd KPSS: *Stenografichesky otchet* (*Stenographic Report of the 22nd Congress of the CPSU*), Moscow, 1961, vol. 2, p. 588.
- 3 *Vremya i My* (Tel Aviv), no. 48, 1979, pp. 164–5.
- 4 In connection with the changes in the leadership of the armed forces, mention must also be made of the dismissal of the Commander-in-Chief of the Navy, Admiral N. G. Kuznetsov, which had taken place at the beginning of 1956. According to rumours that circulated at the time, Kuznetsov's dismissal occurred after an explosion in the cruiser *Chervona Ukraina*, which happened only a few minutes after Khrushchev had left the ship. This explosion was seen as an attempt on Khrushchev's life, coming as it did just after the Twentieth Congress. I regret to say that these rumours found their way into the *Political Diary* edited by me and also into *Khrushchev: The Years in Power*, which I wrote with my brother Zhores [New York, Columbia University Press, 1976]. These rumours were untrue. No attempt was made on Khrushchev's life after the Twentieth Congress, and the explosion on the *Chervona Ukraina* occurred six months after his visit. Kuznetsov clashed with Khrushchev well before the Twentieth Congress in an argument about the problems raised by the further development of the Soviet Navy. Under Stalin, at the end of the 1940s, it had been decided to build several large surface vessels to serve as the basis of the Navy. By 1954–5, although the task was nearing completion and on a number of the new cruisers long-range guns had already been mounted, several milliard roubles were still required for the completion of this programme. However, Khrushchev shared neither Stalin's ideas about the Navy nor his ambitions. He considered that the development of nuclear missiles was making large warships merely so many easy targets for an enemy and thought it more expedient to build submarines and small vessels equipped with nuclear weapons. His view prevailed, and the decision was taken to scrap the unfinished ships. This was regarded by the sailors as a severe blow. Kuznetsov was wholly opposed to the decision, and as he left a session of the Politburo he remarked to Khrushchev in particular: 'The Navy will not forget what you have done.' Khrushchev himself did not forget those words, and he made the loss of the *Chervona Ukraina* his pretext for dismissing Kuznetsov.

12 *At the Helm: Reforms Civil and Military*

- 1 K. Marx and F. Engels, *Sochineniya (Works)*, vol. 16, p. 197; vol. 23, pp. 492ff. ('Instructions for the Delegates of the Provisional General Council to the Congress of the International Association of Working Men at Geneva, September 1866', sect. 4, in *International Courier*, 13 March 1867; *Capital*, vol. 1, ch. 15, sect. 9). V. I. Lenin, *Polnoye sobranie sochinenii (Complete Collected Works)*, vol. 2, p. 485; vol. 41, pp. 315–18 (*Collected Works*, 4th edn., London, Lawrence & Wishart, 1979, vol. 2, p. 472; vol. 31, pp. 296–9: 'Gems of Narodnik Project-Mongering', 1897, and 'The Tasks of the Youth League', 1920).
- 2 *Pravda*, 21 September 1958.
- 3 *ibid.* (The full text of Khrushchev's memorandum was published in *Soviet News*, 26 September 1958.)

13 *'The Peoples Demand Détente'*

- 1 O. B. Borisov and B. T. Koloskov, *Sovetsko-kitaiskie otnosheniya (Sino-Soviet Relations)*, Moscow, 1977, p. 253.

14 *The Last Good Harvest and the Seven-Year Plan*

- 1 *Krokodil*, no. 33, 1958, pp. 2–3.
- 2 N. S. Khrushchev, *Stroitel'stvo kommunizma v SSR i razvitie sel'skogo khozyaistva (The Building of Communism in the USSR and the Development of Agriculture)*, Moscow, 1962, vol. 3, pp. 131–2.

15 *Agriculture: Reorganization and Reform*

- 1 *Narodnoye khozyaistvo SSR (The Economy of the USSR)*, 1962, Moscow, Central Statistical Board, pp. 248–9.

16 *Conflict and Compromise: Berlin, Cuba and Peking*

- 1 *Kommunist*, no. 6, 1981, p. 92.
- 2 *Pravda*, 4 June 1961.
- 3 *ibid.*, 9 June 1961 (original words from the report in *The Times*).
- 4 *ibid.*, 9 July 1961.
- 5 *ibid.*, 5 August 1961.
- 6 The Doctrine had been proclaimed by the fifth President of the USA, James Monroe, in 1823, when it constituted a protest against the

- restoration of Spanish rule in Latin America. In a message to Congress Monroe said: 'The American continents, by the free and independent condition which they have assumed and maintain, are henceforth not to be considered as subjects for future colonization by any European powers.'
- 7 *Khrushchev Remembers*, ed. Edward Crankshaw, London, André Deutsch, 1971, p. 496.
 - 8 See Robert F. Kennedy, *Thirteen Days: The Cuban Missile Crisis, October 1962*, London, Macmillan, 1969, pp. 80–90.
 - 9 *Izvestiya*, 30 October 1962.
 - 10 *ibid.*, 26 May 1963.
 - 11 A. D. Sakharov, *O Strane i mire (My Country and the World)*, New York, Khronika, 1976, pp. vii–viii.
 - 12 *Izvestiya*, 4 August 1963.
- 17 *The Party: a Review of its Aims and Administration*
- 1 XXII-y s'ezd KPSS: *Stenografichesky otchet (Stenographic Report of the 22nd Congress of the CPSU)* Moscow, 1961, vol. 3, p. 276.
 - 2 *ibid.*, p. 344.
- 18 *The Twenty-Second Party Congress and its Aftermath*
- 1 *Kommunist*, no. 18, 1959, p. 47.
 - 2 XXII-y s'ezd KPSS: *Stenografichesky otchet (Stenographic Report of the 22nd Congress of the CPSU)*, Moscow, 1961, vol. 1, p. 105.
 - 3 Translation by Herbert Marshall, in *Yevtushenko: Poems*, Oxford, Pergamon Press, 1966, pp. 109ff.
 - 4 *Pravda*, 19 May 1962.
 - 5 G. Boffa, *Posle Khrushcheva (After Khrushchev)*, Moscow, Progress, 1965. The author quotes from a Russian translation of this book, produced for 'restricted' circulation. In the Italian original, *Dopo Krusciov*, Turin, Einaudi, 1965, the equivalent passages appear on pp. 132–4.
 - 6 *ibid.*
 - 7 *Pravda*, 2 December 1962.
 - 8 *Vremya i My (Tel Aviv)*, no. 41, 1979, p. 176.
 - 9 This saying is equivalent to the English 'The leopard can never change its spots.'
 - 10 Accounts of Khrushchev's exchange with Yevtushenko and his March 1963 speech are to be found in Priscilla Johnson, *Khrushchev and the Arts*, Cambridge, Mass., MIT Press, 1965, pp. 121–2, 147–86.
 - 11 This manuscript was also read by Khrushchev's son and daughter, who were very impressed by it. Their father could not be persuaded to read it, however: he wanted neither to hear nor to read criticism of Lysenko. See

Zh. A. Medvedev, *The Rise and Fall of T. D. Lysenko*, New York, Columbia University Press, 1969.

12 *Izvestiya*, 29 June 1963.

19 *Discontent: the First Signs of Opposition*

1 *Pravda*, 18 April 1964 (translation from the report in *The Times*).

21 *Khrushchev's 'Finest Hour'*

1 Michel Tatu, *Power in the Kremlin*, London, Collins, 1969, p. 385n.

2 Mark Frankland, *Khrushchev*, Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1966, p. 206.

22 *Retirement: Adjustment and Reappraisal*

1 G. K. Zhukov, *Vospominaniya i razmyshleniya (Recollections and Reflections)*, Moscow, 1969, p. 541.

23 *A Proper Epitaph*

1 Robert G. Kaiser, *Russia: the People and the Power*, London, Secker & Warburg, 1976, pp. 211–12.

2 A. Nekrich, *Otreshis' ot strakha (Renounce Fear)*, London, Overseas Publications Interchange, 1979, pp. 362–3.

3 Ernst Neizvestny, *Vremya i My (Tel-Aviv)*, no. 41, 1979, p. 180.

4 *Pravda*, 18 April 1964.

5 Mark Frankland, *Khrushchev*, Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1966, p. 209.

Glossary

ASSR	Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic
Banderists	followers of Stephen Bandera, a Ukrainian Nationalist who was released from prison in Poland in 1939
Bulba's Men	group of Ukrainian Nationalists led by Taras Borovets, who took the name of Gogol's hero Taras Bulba
cadre	Communist Party functionary
centner	unit of weight: 100 kg or 220·4 lb
Central Committee	the body within the Communist Party that directs the activities of the Party between Party Congresses, selects and appoints leading officials, directs the work of Government bodies and public organizations through Party groups within them, looks after the Party's budget and so on; each Republic has its own Central Committee
Cheka	the name by which the secret police – members of the Extraordinary Commission for Struggle with Counter-Revolution and Sabotage – were known before that organization was disbanded in 1922
Commissar	<i>see</i> People's Commissar
Council of People's Commissars	equivalent of today's Council of Ministers
dacha	holiday cottage in the countryside outside a city or large town
gorispolkom	executive committee of a soviet (q.v.) at city or town level
gorkom	abbreviation of <i>gorodskoy komitet</i> – Communist Party committee for a town or city

GRU	abbreviation of <i>Glavnoye Razvedyvatelnoye Upravlenie</i> – Main Intelligence Directorate (of the Soviet Army)
Gulag	abbreviation of <i>Gosudarstvennoye Upravleniye Lagerei</i> – State Administration of the Camps
KGB	abbreviation of <i>Komitet Gosudarstvennoy Bezopasnosti</i> – Committee of State Security
Komsomol	abbreviation of <i>Kommunisticheskii Soyuz Molodezhi</i> – Young Communist League (full title: All-Union Leninist Communist League of Youth)
KPSS	abbreviation of <i>Kommunisticheskaya Partiya Sovetskovo Soyuza</i> – the Communist Party of the Soviet Union
kulak	wealthy peasant
kray	region (equivalent to an oblast – q.v.) that includes autonomous districts
kraykom	abbreviation of <i>kraynoy komitet</i> – Party committee of a kray (q.v.)
machine/tractor stations	central depots for agricultural machinery used by several collective farms
Melnikovites	older group of Ukrainian Nationalists, followers of Colonel Andrew Melnyk
Mensheviks	literally, ‘members of the minority’; the right or moderate wing – as opposed to Lenin’s Bolsheviks (‘members of the majority’) – of the Russian Social Democratic Labour Party after its split in 1903. The Mensheviks opposed the October Revolution, and their party was eventually suppressed, but numerous individual Mensheviks entered the service of the Soviet Government as economists, etc. Some of these were accused of sabotage and treason in a show trial in 1931. In Georgia, where they enjoyed strong support, the Mensheviks maintained an independent Government until the Red Army invaded that country in 1921
MGB	abbreviation of <i>Ministerstvo Gosudarstvennoy Bezopasnosti</i> – Ministry of State Security; title of the secret police from 1946 until the execution of Beria (1953), when the Ministry was reduced to a Committee (KGB – q.v.)

Musavatists	National Socialist Party of Azerbaijan, founded in 1911. <i>Musavat</i> literally means 'equality'. This Muslim movement, which sought independence for Azerbaijan, fought the Communists when they seized Baku. The Musavatist Government, later installed by the Turks, capitulated to the Red Army in 1920.
<i>muzhik</i>	peasant
MVD	abbreviation of <i>Ministerstvo Vnutrennikh Del</i> – Ministry of Internal Affairs; responsible, together with the MGB (q.v.), for the police apparatus. The two Ministries were merged for a time after Stalin's death, under Beria
NKVD	abbreviation for <i>Narodnii Kommissariat Vnutrennikh Del</i> – People's Commissariat of Internal Affairs; responsible for the police apparatus from 1934 to 1946, when the People's Commissariats were renamed Ministries
<i>nomenklatura</i>	the list of the most important posts in the machinery of state, with parallel indication of those Communists, at various levels of the Party hierarchy, from among whom appointments to these posts must be made
obkom	abbreviation of <i>oblastnoy komitet</i> – Party committee of oblast (q.v.)
oblast	province or region; an administrative division equivalent to a British county or a French <i>département</i>
oblispolkom	abbreviation of <i>oblastnoy ispolnitel'nyi komitet</i> – executive committee of the provincial or regional soviet in government (as opposed to Party) administration
okrug	administrative district of an oblast before 1946
okruzhkom	abbreviation of <i>okruzhnoy komitet</i> – okrug (q.v.) committee of the Communist Party
People's Commissar	equivalent of Minister during the period 1917–46
Politburo	the political bureau (i.e. the top echelon) of the Central Committee of the Communist Party
pood	unit of weight: 16·38 kg or approximately 36 lb
Presidium	three presidiums are mentioned in this book: (1) the executive committee of the Supreme Soviet

	(q.v.); (2) the 'inner cabinet' of the Council of Ministers; (3), most important, the select group of members of the Central Committee (q.v.) that conducts Communist Party affairs between plenary meetings of the Central Committee
Prosecutor-General	an official appointed by the Supreme Soviet (q.v.) who combines the functions of District Attorney, Inspector of Prisons, Attorney-General and Ombudsman. He and his local officials supervise criminal investigations, authorize arrests, prosecute offenders, administer the prisons and exercise general control over the administration of the legal system
raispolkom	abbreviation of <i>raionnii ispolnitel'nii komitet</i> – executive committee of district soviet in local government administration
raikom	abbreviation of <i>raionnii komitet</i> – Party committee of a raion (q.v.)
raion	administrative division of an oblast (q.v.)
RSFSR	the Russian Soviet Federal Socialist Republic
<i>samizdat</i>	system of clandestine publication of banned works of literature
Secretariat of the Central Committee	the secretaries, who are generally responsible for the entire Party apparatus, act as overlords to the various departments of the Central Committee; there is considerable overlap between them and the members of the Politburo (q.v.)
soviet	literally 'council' – the basic governmental unit of the Soviet system
Sovnarkhoz	regional Economic Council; in 1957 Khrushchev set up 105 of them, but they were reduced to 47 in 1963 and were eventually abolished in 1965
Supreme Soviet	the highest organ of government in the Soviet Union, nominally equivalent to Parliament

Select Biographies

- ABAKUMOV, V. S. (1894–1954) From 1942 head of ‘Smersh’. 1946–51 USSR Minister of State Security. Executed.
- AKHMATOVA, A. A. (1889–1966) Real name Gorenko. Poet. Disgraced under Stalin but finally rehabilitated in 1965.
- BABEL, I. E. (1894–1941) Writer; son of a Jewish tradesman. Arrested in 1937. Died in prison camp in 1941. Rehabilitated in 1957.
- BENEDIKTOV, I. A. (1902–) Agricultural expert. Joined Party in 1930. Commissar for Agriculture 1938–43, 1945–53, 1954–5. Minister for State Farms 1955–7. RSFSR Minister of Agriculture 1957–9.
- BERIA, L. P. (1899–1953) Georgian. Joined the Party in 1917. First Secretary, Transcaucasian Committee of the Communist Party, 1932–8. Commissar for Internal Affairs 1938–45. Deputy Prime Minister in charge of security 1941–53. Organized the terror following the 1936–8 purge, including deportations from E. Europe, where he was also in charge of security. In the post-Stalin power struggle he was defeated, arrested, tried and shot.
- BIERUT, B. (1892–1956) Stalin’s protégé, who replaced Gomulka as Secretary-General of the Polish Workers’ Party in 1948.
- BREZHNEV, L. I. (1906–82) Joined Party 1931. Regional First Secretary 1939–41. Political-military Commissar 1941–5. Candidate member of the Presidium and Secretary of the Central Committee 1952. Member of the Presidium 1957. President of the Supreme Soviet 1960–4 and Secretary of the Party Central Committee 1963. First Secretary of the Central Committee since 1964 and Secretary-General since 1966. Chairman of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet since 1977.
- BUDYONNY, S. M. (1883–1973) Marshal of the USSR. Led the First Cavalry Army in Russian civil war (1919) and in Soviet-Polish war (1920). Commanded South-Western Front 1941–2. Member of Party Central Committee 1939–52.
- BUKHARIN, N. I. (1888–1938) Headed so-called ‘right opposition’ of Party and was advocate of New Economic Policy. Supported Stalin after

Lenin's death but was expelled from Politburo by Stalin in 1929. Show trial 1938.

BULGANIN, N. A. (1895–1975) Became Deputy Premier in 1938. Minister of Defence 1947–9, 1953–5. Member of Politburo 1952–8. Chairman of Council of Ministers after Malenkov's fall in 1955. Supported so-called 'anti-Party group' in 1957. Dismissed in 1958.

CASTRO, Fidel (1926–) Studied law at the University of Havana. Became a Communist in 1950s. Led Cuban revolution and came to power in 1959. Has led Cuban Government ever since.

CASTRO, Raúl (1931–) Younger brother of Fidel. Minister of Cuban armed forces 1959–65.

DUBČEK, A. (1921–) Became leader of Czechoslovak Communist Party in 1968. Planned to introduce reforms in Party and state that led to the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia that year and to his removal from office in 1969.

EHRENBURG, I. G. (1891–1967) Writer, whose novel *The Thaw* lent its name to the period of cultural liberalism in the USSR of the late 1950s.

GIEREK, E. (1913–) Became Polish Party Secretary in 1970.

GROMYKO, A. A. (1909–) Joined Party in 1931. Became diplomat in 1939. Has served in both USA and UK. Soviet Foreign Minister since 1957.

GOMULKA, W. (1905–) Joined Party in 1926. Emerged as Communist leader of Poland after Second World War. Later denounced and imprisoned by Stalin. Restored to power in 1956. Ousted in 1970.

HOXHA, E. (1908–) First Secretary, Albanian Party of Labour, and commander-in-chief of Albanian armed forces.

ILYICHEV, L. F. (1906–) Chief editor of *Pravda* 1950–3. From 1954 head of Press Department of Foreign Ministry. Secretary, Party Central Committee, 1961–5. Deputy Foreign Minister Since 1966.

KÁDÁR, J. (1912–) Joined Hungarian Communist Party in 1932. Became Secretary of Party after Soviet invasion in 1956.

KAGANOVICH, L. M. (1893–) Secretary of Ukrainian Party 1925. Member of Politburo from 1930. Joined Molotov and Malenkov in opposition to Khrushchev in 1957 and lost all official positions.

KALININ, M. I. (1875–1946) Playing active part in revolutions of 1905 and 1917. Bolshevik. Helped to found *Pravda*. Became member of Politburo in 1926.

KAMENEV, L. B. (1883–1936) Real name Rosenfeld. Leading Bolshevik and close associate of Zinoviev. Supported Zinoviev and Stalin against Trotsky and then Trotsky against Stalin. Arrested 1935. Tried and shot 1936.

- KIROV, S. M. (1886–1934) Real name Kostrikov. Joined Bolshevik Party in 1905. Party Secretary in Baku, then in Leningrad in 1926. Strong supporter of Stalin but was assassinated in December 1934, an act that signalled the start of the Great Purge.
- KONEV, I. S. (1897–1973) Distinguished soldier and Marshal of the Soviet Union. Joined Party in 1918. Became First Deputy Minister of Defence in 1956.
- KOSIOR, S. V. (1889–1939) Joined Party in 1907. Held several Party posts in the Ukraine, including that of Secretary of the Central Committee of the Ukrainian Party. Executed during Stalin's purges.
- KOSYGIN, A. N. (1904–80) Joined Party in 1927. Trained as textile engineer and became Commissar for the textile industry in 1939. Elected to Central Committee 1939. Deputy Prime Minister 1940–6. Later Minister for Finance and for Light Industry. Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the USSR 1964–80.
- KOZLOV, F. R. (1908–65) First Secretary, Leningrad obkom, from 1953. Member of the Central Committee of the Party from 1952 and of the Presidium 1957–64.
- KUZNETZOV, A. A. (1905–49) Second Secretary of Leningrad region Party Committee 1937–8. First Secretary of Leningrad City Party Committee 1945–6. Executed during so-called 'Leningrad affair' in 1949.
- KUZNETZOV, N. G. (1902–74) Joined Party in 1925. Vice-Admiral. Became First Deputy Minister of Defence in 1953.
- LENIN, V. I. (1870–1924) Real name Ul'yanov. Founder and leader of the Bolshevik Party. Founder of the Soviet state and first head of the Soviet Government. Arrested 1897 for subversive activities and in 1900 emigrated to W. Europe, where he continued to seek power by trying to seize control of the Social Democratic Party. His followers formed the Bolshevik group, and he returned to Russia in 1905–7 to lead the Bolsheviks through the final stages of the revolution of those years. Emigrated again until 1917, when he returned to Russia and, with Trotsky, organized the October Revolution. He established the Soviet Government, which he led, as Chairman of the Council of People's Commissars, until his death.
- LIU SHAO-CHI (1898–19?) Secretary of the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party 1943–56. President of the Chinese People's Republic 1959–68. Overthrown and imprisoned during 'Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution'. Death revealed 1974, but neither date nor place has been divulged.
- LYSENKO, T. D. (1898–1976) Biologist and agriculturist. President of the Lenin Academy of Agricultural Sciences 1938–56 and 1961–3. Propounded theory that heredity was not determined by chromosomes or

DNA but could be modified by environmental influences (extremes of temperature, for example) and that acquired characteristics could be inherited (neo-Lamarckism). Dismissed from all posts 1965.

MALENKOV, G. M. (1902–) Joined Party 1920. From 1921 to 1925 worked in the Central Committee organization. Head of the Central Committee personnel branch 1934–9 and in this position was one of the leaders of the 1936–8 purge. Member of the State Defence Committee 1941–5. Politburo member 1946. Prime Minister 1953. Resigned and became a deputy Prime Minister 1955. Expelled from the Central Committee and Presidium in 1957 and from the Party in 1961.

MALINOVSKY, R. Y. (1898–1967) Distinguished soldier. Marshal of the Soviet Union. Joined Party 1926. Minister of Defence 1957–66.

MELNIKOV, L. G. (1906–) First Secretary, Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Ukraine, 1949–53.

MIKOYAN, A. I. (1895–1978) Joined Bolshevik Party in 1915. Head of the north Caucasian Party organization 1922–6. From 1926 to 1955 in charge of the food and trade industries in various capacities. Member of the Central Committee from 1923. Deputy Prime Minister from 1937. Member of the Politburo from 1939. Prominent within the collective leadership after 1955. First deputy Prime Minister 1955–64. Chairman of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet 1964. Retired on grounds of ill health 1965.

MOLOTOV, V. M. (1890–) Real name Skryabin. Joined Bolshevik Party in 1906. Second Secretary of the Central Committee 1921–30. Chairman, Council of People's Commissars, 1930–41; deputy Chairman 1941–53; first deputy Chairman 1953–7. Commissar for Foreign Affairs 1939–49 and 1953–6. Dismissed from most of his posts in 1957, when he was appointed Ambassador to the Mongolian People's Republic. Appointed permanent delegate to the International Atomic Energy Agency, Vienna, 1960–1. Expelled from the Party 1961.

MOSKALENKO, K. S. (1902–) Marshal of the Soviet Union. Joined Red Army in 1920. Commander of Moscow military region 1953–60. Deputy Minister of Defence 1960–2.

MUNNICH, F. (1886–1967) Born Budapest. Trained as a lawyer. Fought in Russian civil war. Helped to organize Hungarian Red Army. Fought in Spanish civil war. Served as a diplomat 1950–6. In 1961 became President of Hungarian Government.

NAGY, I. (1896–1958) Premier of Hungary 1953–5 and October–November 1956. Abducted by Soviet troops, tried in secret in Romania and executed.

NOVOTNY, A. (1904–) First Secretary of Czechoslovak Communist Party 1953–67. Fell from power in 1968. Replaced by Dubček.

- OCHAB, E. (1906–) Became Polish Party Secretary after Bierut's death in 1956. Withdrew from public life in 1968 on grounds of ill health.
- ORDZHONIKIDZE, G. K. (1886–1937) Joined Bolshevik Party in 1903. Played active part in 1917 revolution and in civil war. From 1932 Commissar for Heavy Industry. Became member of Politburo in 1930. Repeatedly opposed purges. Committed suicide.
- PERVUKHIN, M. G. (1904–78) Member of Central Committee Presidium 1952–7.
- PODGORNY, N. V. (1903–) Joined Party in 1930. Deputy Commissar for the food industries 1940–2. Prominent in the Ukraine Party in the 1950s. Member of the Party Presidium 1960–77 and Chairman of Supreme Soviet 1965–77.
- POSPELOV, P. N. (1898–1979) Worked on *Bolshevik*, a theoretical magazine of the Central Committee, and on *Pravda*. Editor-in-chief of latter 1952–3. Director of the Institute of Marxism-Leninism 1949–52 and 1961–7.
- RUDENKO, R. A. (1907–) Joined Party in 1926. Worked in Procuracy from 1929. Became Procurator-General of the Ukraine in 1944 and retained this post until 1953. Subsequently Procurator-General of the USSR. Chief Soviet prosecutor at the Nuremberg trials of Nazi war criminals.
- RYKOV, A. I. (1881–1938) Played leading role in economic affairs. Premier 1924–9. Dropped from the Politburo in 1929. Arrested, tried and shot in 1938.
- SABUROV, M. Z. (1900–) Head of State Planning Commission for many years. Became member of the Politburo in 1952. Demoted in 1957, when he was a member of the 'anti-Party group'.
- SAKHAROV, A. D. (1921–) Academician. Physicist: 'father of the Soviet H-bomb'. Since 1968 activist in the human rights movement; now in internal exile.
- SEROV, I. A. (1905–) Deputy People's Commissar for State Security during Second World War. Subsequently deputy head of 'Smersh'. Chairman of KGB 1954–8. Head of GRU 1958–61. Second Secretary of Kazakhstan Republic 1961–4.
- SHEHU, M. (1913–80) Chairman of the Council of Ministers of Albania from 1954.
- SHELEPIN, A. N. (1918–) Head of KGB 1958–61. Member of Politburo 1963–75.
- SHEPILOV, D. T. (1905–) Editor-in-chief of *Pravda* 1953–6. Member of the Central Committee of the Party 1952–7. Minister of Foreign Affairs 1956–7. Dismissed as member of 'anti-Party group' 1957.

SHVERNIK, N. M. (1888–1970) Member of the Central Committee of the Party from 1925 and of the Presidium 1952–3. From 1930 Chairman of the all-Union Trade Union Council.

SOLZHENITSYN, A. I. (1918–) Writer who achieved fame with his novel *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich* (published in 1962), which describes life in a Soviet labour camp in the early 1950s. Studied mathematics and physics at Rostov. Artillery officer 1942–5. Arrested on a charge of anti-Soviet activity 1945. Released 1953. After three years of exile became a school teacher. His novels *The First Circle* and *Cancer Ward* were smuggled out of the Soviet Union and published in the West in 1968. He was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1970 but was unable to attend the ceremony. Four years later, after the publication of *The Gulag Archipelago* in France, he was deported to the West.

STALIN, I. V. (1879–1953) Real name Dzhugashvili. Joined the Bolshevik faction in 1903 and became a member of the Bolshevik Central Committee. Commissar for Nationalities' Affairs 1917–23 and for State Control 1919–23. General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Party from 1922. After Lenin's death he defeated various inner-Party factions to emerge as head of collective leadership. From 1934 established personal rule in place of collective leadership. Purges of the Party instigated by him culminated in the Great Purge of 1936–8. Thereafter he was officially head of the Government and ruled by terror, establishing similar regimes throughout most of E. Europe.

SUSLOV, M. A. (1902–82) Joined Party in 1921. Graduate of Moscow Institute of Economics 1928. Worked in the Party and the Soviet Control Commissions 1931–4. Elected Secretary of Rostov obkom 1937. First Secretary of Stavropol kray 1939. Elected to Central Committee of the Party 1944. Chairman of the Central Committee Bureau for Lithuania 1944–6. Became a Party Secretary 1947 and later Chief of the Administration for Propaganda and Agitation, with which he was identified for the rest of his life. Editor-in-chief of *Pravda* 1949–50. Appointed to the Presidium 1952.

SVERDLOV, Y. M. (1885–1919) First Chairman of the Central Executive Committee of the Congress of Soviets.

THOREZ, M. (1900–64) Leader of the French Communist Party from 1930.

TIKHONOV, N. A. (1905–) Replaced Kosygin as Chairman of the Council of Ministers in 1980.

TITO, J. B. (1892–1980) Leader of the Yugoslav Partisans in Second World War. Fought for a socialist regime in Yugoslavia. Became President of the new Yugoslav state 1945, in which position he steadfastly and successfully defied the authority of the Soviet Union.

- TROTSKY, L. D. (1879–1940) Real name Bronstein. Joined the Social Democratic Party in 1896. After the split in the movement in 1903 became a Menshevik but later organized separate faction. Chairman of the St Petersburg soviet during the 1905 revolution. Arrested and escaped abroad. During the First World War he was expelled from France and lived for a short while in the USA. Returned to Russia in 1917, joined Bolshevik Party and organized the October Revolution with Lenin. Commissar for Foreign Affairs 1917–18. Commissar for War 1918–25. Member of Politburo 1919–27. Having been ousted by Stalin, he was expelled from the Party in 1927, banished to Central Asia in 1928 and expelled from the Soviet Union in 1929. Murdered in Mexico City, where he had settled.
- TVARDOVSKY, A. T. (1910–71) Poet. Liberal editor of the literary journal *Novy Mir*. Supported Solzhenitsyn, among others, and persuaded Khrushchev to permit the publication of *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich*. Removed from post in 1970.
- ULBRICHT, W. (1893–1973) From 1949 First Secretary of the Socialist Unity Party of Germany.
- VOROSHILOV, K. E. (1881–1969) Close associate of Stalin. Commissar of Defence from 1925. Member of Politburo from 1926 until removed by Khrushchev in 1958. Chairman of Presidium of Supreme Soviet (nominal President) 1953–8.
- VYSHINSKY, A. Y. (1885–1954) Joined Bolsheviks in 1920 – previously a Menshevik. Procurator-General in 1935, during the great purge trials. Foreign Minister 1949–53.
- YEVTUSHENKO, Y. (1933–) Distinguished and popular poet.
- YEZHOV, N. I. (1895–1939) Commissar of Internal Affairs (NKVD) 1936. Launched savage purge on Stalin's orders, for which he became known as the 'Iron Commissar'. Abruptly appointed Commissar for Water Transport in 1938 and then arrested. Fate unknown. Presumably shot.
- ZHDANOV, A. A. (1896–1948) Revolutionary worker in Soviet Army. Became Secretary of Party in Leningrad in 1934 (as successor to Kirov). Became member of Politburo in 1939. Took part in cultural repression of 1946–8.
- ZHIVKOV, T. (1911–) From 1954 First Secretary of Central Committee of Bulgarian Communist Party. Premier 1962–71. President of Bulgaria since 1971.
- ZHUKOV, G. K. (1896–1974) Marshal of the Soviet Union and distinguished soldier. Often acted as Stalin's deputy. Demoted after Second World War but became Minister of Defence after Stalin's death. Dismissed 1957.

ZINOVIEV, G. E. (1883–1936) Real name Radomyslsky. Joined Social Democratic Party in 1901 and worked closely with Lenin abroad, returning with him to Russia in 1917. Leader of Party in Petrograd (Leningrad) and Chairman of Comintern after 1917. Removed from both posts in 1926 and expelled from the Party 1927. Arrested 1935. Executed in 1936 as one of the first victims of the terror of 1936–8.

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